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THE WILD KNIGHT;

OR,

THE UNKNOWN CRUSADER.

A TALE OF GERMANY IN THE DAYS OF THE EMPIRE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

CHAPTER XIV.

A STARTLING EMERGENCY.

As the first beams of the morning sun came dancing o'er the mountain tops, gilding its vast and towers of the old castle in its golden floods, Engelbert of Marburg touched his friend upon the shoulder. The sleeper started and sat up when he saw the bright beams upon the opposite wall, he leaped from the bed. In the chairs were all the arrangements for bathing, and when this had been attended to the crusaders left their chamber and moved towards the great stairway. Ere they had gone many steps they were met by Agnes and Constance, and the former demanded that they should turn back to the chamber they had just left. Of course the knights were at her side to obey the command; and having re-entered the apartment, and closed the door behind him, Agnes was about to speak when she saw the dark pool of clotted blood upon the floor, and shuddered where it had been mopped along towards the wainscoting at the foot of the bed.

"Mercy!" she gasped, turning pale and trembling. "What is this?"

"It is nothing, the heart of Judah the Gaushin emptied itself, my lady," returned Engelbert.

"Agnes, Agnes," added the knight, taking the maiden's hand as he spoke, "we had visitors during the night; and you may lay away in your memory the simple bit of knowledge that your virginity saved both our lives—Engelbert's and mine."

The girls were anxious, and the Black Knight told the story of the adventure just as it had happened, relating all their arrangements before and after the coming of the *assassins*.

"But you have no more occasion for alarm," added the crusader; "so far as we know there is the castle this morning, and when we next come we may be sure free from persecution."

Awhile Agnes pondered upon what had happened, and finally she said, while the deep light of her eyes burned with a strange intensity—

"This has fixed the seal upon my rejection of Rudolf of Baden. I do not think my guardian will urge the matter when he knows of this."

"Ah—you forget me," returned Constance, with a sad look and tone.

Agnes shook, for she knew well to what her companion alluded.

"Alas!" continued the last speaker, "where Everhard lies at his head no mortal power can turn him unless he will. If he still persists in claiming my hand he will do anything to gain it."

"And yet they shall not do it," cried Agnes.

"God grant it!" ejaculated Constance.

"But to our business," interposed Agnes. A blush suffused her fair face for a moment, but it was soon gone, and then she looked down at him with upon her features. "As we are all engaged in the same path, and as our hope for joy in the future hang upon the same result, we will not be governed by any undue or unnecessary reserve. You, gentlemen, know what has passed, and you know what we hope for in the future. You are about to leave us, and we must remain here within the physical power, at least, of those who are members of the same faith. You know of the means those who have sworn to marry us. Why hide the truth now? You have my interest with the very vitality of love's life. Our whole future of joy on earth is bound up in that. Constance has confessed all to me; and I tell thee, Sir Engelbert, thou hast won a heart worth keeping, even at a sacrifice."

"Hush, Agnes," murmured the maiden she plainly referred to, "you do not know what you say."

"No, no," interposed Marburg. "She has nothing to hush, for she but speaks the solemn truth. My life is pledged to the support of my claim."

"And mine," added the Black Knight, as he continued Agnes. "Time is on the wing, and will not wait for us. We can not rest on a while. We can keep off the claims of these two counts a short time longer; but what may we expect in the future? Pardon me, my best and noblest friend," she added, turning to her lover, "but I know not yet—"

"Hold," interrupted the Black Knight, waving a step forward and holding forth his hand. "I know all you would say. If we go to Aix-la-Chapelle we must go by some public route, there and back, with one or two days to spare. We can do all the travelling in six days if we can find horses on the road. Say two weeks in all. Can you remain so you are for two weeks?"

"There cannot be any possible doubt of that," said Agnes.

"And what say you, Constance?"

Constance of Baden had more to contend with than had her companion. The Count Everhard, with all his wickedness, had some noble traits, and as guardian of Agnes he might not be cruel beyond a certain limit. She could enter a convent if she chose, and thus put away the fatal suppliant; but poor Constance could not even do that. As her brother said, so must she do, and upon earth there was no tribunal to which she could appeal. She was a mourner of the house of Baden, and Rudolf was its lord and master! Yet she answered,—

LOVE'S MESSENGER TO THE KNIGHT OF THE EAGLE.

"I think we may do that—if they do not suspect."

"Oh—I am sure of it. Why—they would not dare to cross us so!" And as Agnes thus spoke her eyes flashed proudly.

"Hold out two weeks," said the Unknown, "and if I live I will return to you. Beyond that we will provide for them. Sufficient unto that time is the work of reaching it in peace and safety."

Though considerable was said upon that point, yet the matter was left as thus reached; and when the parties separated it was with the mutual understanding that they should meet again in two weeks and their hopes beyond that—even the hopes of Engelbert himself—rested upon the mysterious power of the Unknown Crusader.

For the first time Agnes received her lover's warm kiss upon the lips, and Engelbert, taking courage from so illustrious an example, followed suit; while Constance, ashamed of nothing which her heart prompted, returned the talismanic pledge of love.

"Twill be better not to be seen together again," remarked Agnes; "so here let our adieus be spoken. Oh! my noble, generous one, God be with and guard thee!"

With a tear in his eye the Unknown pressed the fair maiden to his bosom, and bestowed upon her a blessing in return.

"Hark!" uttered Constance, whose quick ear was alive to the sound of danger. "Did you hear a footfall in the corridor?"

"No. 'Twas nothing," said Agnes.

They listened, but heard nothing, and in a few moments more the girls departed.

"There is my step upon the great stairs!" whispered Constance.

"Pooh!" returned her companion. "'Tis nothing, I assure thee. Some servant, probably."

And so it was a servant; but a servant of the arch devil. Rudolf of Baden had been at the door. He had not seen Conrad yet, and he had come up to look into the room when he saw the party of lovers just entering from the corridor! But the maidens knew it not, and 'twas well for them that they did not, for they had bright hopes now; and they would have held hope faintly had they known all.

Shortly after the girls had gone the two crusaders once more left the apartment. As the head of the great stairs they met the Count Everhard. As soon as the morning salutations had passed the Unknown took his host by the arm and led him back to the chamber he had just left.

"My Lord of Württemberg," he said, with some firmness in his manner, but yet kindly, "I have left a matter upon your floor for which I ask pardon."

"Ha!" cried the wild count, starting forward as he saw the blood. "What is this?"

"Do you know—or did you know—a stout monk named Jakub?"

"The brother of Sir John, you mean?—of the Sir John you were yesterday with?"

"The same, my lord."

"Of course I know him. He slept in the cabin."

"And now he sleeps in the arms of death. He came here during the night and was slain."

"But the body?" gasped the host, starting with a sudden emotion as he saw that the trail of blood led towards the secret entrance to the room.

"His companion took it off."

"Companion?" uttered Everhard, becoming more and more excited. "There is a mystery here. Out with it, sir."

"Then lead me thine own," returned our hero. And thereupon he related the whole story, only omitting the part which Agnes had played, and also the confession of the armorer.

"Sir Knight," spoke the host, when the story was finished, and at the same time gazing sternly into the narrator's face, "do you hold the least shadow of a suspicion that I am in any way connected with this, or that I had the least idea that anything of the kind was contemplated?"

Everhard of Württemberg," responded our hero, reaching forth and taking his host's hand as he spoke, "I know thee to be a bold and reckless man, as well as deeply wanting in moral character; but, as God is the judge betwixt thee and me, I would lay my life in thy keeping with as firm a faith as that with which the child rests its head upon the bosom of its mother! And more still: had I not of help, to strike a foe in the dark, the Lord of Württemberg would be the last man I should seek!"

"Sir Unknown," returned the count, with a warm glow upon his face, "I thank thee. There'd every man dares to speak the whole truth as thou hast done. I am sorry for this; but of one thing I am sure—more than the next eight men spredden under my roof thou shalt spend in safety, even if to secure it I struck down my friend!"

"I believe thee," said our hero, though for the moment he shall not prove thee, as we started once for the capital."

Together the trio descended to the hall, and ere long breakfast was prepared. Rudolf of Baden did not appear, though there were numerous other knights and gentlemen who had remained in the castle over night. As soon as the meal was ended the two crusaders set forth for the court, where they found their squires busily engaged in cleaning the horses.

"Were were you last night?" asked Engelbert.

"We had to sleep in the out of the old woman in the vale below," replied Ferdinand.

"Why was that?"

"Because our lord was wanted for some knights." "But was there no other room?"

"The Count of Baden said not."

"Ah—yes—I see. It's all right. But look well to the trappings, my men; and also keep an eye upon the heavy weapons. We have all ready as soon as possible. We must sleep in Heidelberg to-night. And you know the road—you have all passed over it?"

"We can be ready in a very few minutes, sir." After this the knights returned to the dwelling, and having donned their armor and buckled on their swords, they sought their host. They were now by the side of Baden room near the outer gate as they passed through the hall. He was in his armor, and rode directly at his side. They shook hands with Everhard—promised to stop when they came that way again—and having exchanged a kind adieu, they turned away. Their horses were ready for them, and, as they mounted, a hundred of the count's men-at-arms gave them the parting salutation. The gate was already open, and the travellers left a mark upon your floor for which I ask pardon." left a mark upon your floor for which I ask pardon."

When they reached the green vale, the noble steeds pranced right joyously, and were eager for the race. They little heeded—faithful animals!—the danger which lay in the path they bore through path they were to tread. At the out our here pulled up, and called for old Gottlieb. She came, and she pressed his hand to her lips as he bade her adieu.

"We shall be back in two weeks," he said; "but my nothing of it at the castle."

"You may trust me," she returned. And then, having fondlessly glanced about her, as though she would see that no one had arisen from the hard earth during the last half-silence, she added—

"You will keep on by the Magdaseen path?"

"Certainly. We can go by no other."

"Because my boy has gone out there for something—I don't just know what, though perhaps he may tell you if he see you. You may love Hendrick, my good—a—sir; for if he is my son, I may say he is a noble boy."

"I have seen enough to tell me that, Gottlieb. But we must be off. Adieu."

"God bless ye, my noble boy! God bless ye!"

"Brother," said Engelbert, when they had gained the wood, "that old woman knows you."

"Ah," uttered the other, gazing quickly into his companion's face.

"Aye—she does. Why—there is no question about that. You have been before since you have been here this time?"

"Yes; I came down with the horses day before yesterday, you know."

"I remember. And she knew you then?"

"Do you make the assertion, or do you ask the question?" asked the Unknown, with more than usual emotion in conversation of such a kind.

"Both," said Marburg, with a light smile, but which was quickly lost in an eager look.

"Well—she did know me then, the moment she saw me."

Engelbert of Marburg started slightly—somewhat as one might have started who had just seen a piece of gold, or a precious stone, by the wayside. He started then, and then he gazed into the face of his companion. Their eyes met, and they both trembled. A while longer Engelbert gazed eagerly and earnestly—as gazes one who seeks the sequel of a thrilling tale, and then a strange shade came over his face. His lip trembled; his cheek grew first pale, and then red; his brain seemed whirled with the escape of a pent-up breath; and, while a bright tear-drop started out upon the silken lashes of his eye, he extended his hand, and grasped the hand of his friend with a grip of iron.

"Great God of Wonders!" he uttered, while his face beamed with a whole volume of feeling, "how long I have lived in the dark! Now I know why she shed almost every moment—by the side in battle and on the march; at the festive board, and on the couch of sleep; with the strange mystery of her inexplicable love! My own face is not more truthful when, it tells me from the mirror that I am my mother's child than is the love which it tells me thou art—"

"Hold Engelbert," quickly uttered the Black Knight, with a sudden energy in his tone and manner. "I see thou hast guessed the truth; but let that same pass for the present. I must not hear it now. Gladdin knew me, and I am sure the Count of Baden knew me. I had hoped to pass through Swabia without being detected; but I suppose my hopes must be fully thrown."

"Aye—in truth it does," cried Engelbert. "But still it is no cause of wonder that I did not see the truth sooner, for I suppose you will not explain away at the seeming impossibility yet?"

"Not at present, Engelbert. I have my reasons, and they are strong ones; though to you I might open it all, and I will, in view of certain contingencies, received with an oath that not one word of explanation should pass my lips until the world should know me for what I truly am."

For a short distance the two rode on in silence, the conversation being soon war-linked. They had entered the dense forest, and were just turning the abrupt angle of a huge rock, when they were slightly startled by the sound of a human voice. Both the knights stopped, and instinctively they grasped their sword-hilts; but the sound of danger quickly passed as they saw the open, frank countenance of Hendrick Waldenburg. He stepped out into the path in advance of the riders, and having cast his eyes carefully about him, he said—

"I would have to meet you, noble Sir, for I think there's danger lurking in your path. Listen to me, for I must be brief, as I have business to transact in Stuttgart for my master Everhard, and he thinks I am even now on my way. Yesterday my good mother told me that I must watch the Count of Baden on your behalf. I have done so, and am here now to tell you what I have seen. In the first place, your two attendants were sent out out of the castle last evening, when there was no need of it. What happened in the night you know, and I do not; but what has happened in the morning I know, and you do not. At an early hour Rudolf of Baden was astir, and I watched him narrowly, for it is my habits—first he was not wont to hurry from his bed with the rising of the sun. But this morning he was out betimes, and I heard him inquiring for his armorer. Not finding him, he returned to the dwelling, and shortly afterwards I perceived he have business at the great tower. I ascended, and, passing by my lord's apartment, I saw Rudolf of Baden standing by your door, with his ear at the key-hole!"

"Ha! Was't after the sun was up?" uttered the Knight.

"Yes, sir—over half an hour—may be an hour —after."

"By Saint Paul! the villain had our words with the ladies, then!"

"He must have heard something that made him mad, for his hands were clenched, and his face like a demon's. Not long after this he descended to the court and called out twelve knights. They were all of them men of his own stamp—men who have often followed him in his marauding excursions—and men who have for some years stood ready to let themselves for hire to any party who had the means to employ them. To-day, for a stipulated sum, they fight valiantly in defence of a beleaguered city; and to-morrow, for another sum, they join in the same shrinking in the camp of another city. They are bold ecrauds, but reckless and bad. Those twelve knights, in complete armor, rode forth from the castle, Rudolf accompanying them as far as the woods. They are gone this way; and I suppose you can judge as well as I, what they have gone for."

It was now the turn of the other of the Crusaders spoke. The Black Knight seemed more than usually troubled—not with fear, but with perplexity.

"My good Hendrick," he at length said, "do you know any of these knights errant?"

"I know the leader among them. It is Sir Albert von Olfelden. Perhaps you have noticed him."

"Yes—I have; and a stout fellow he is. But I thank thee, Hendrick—we both thank thee—and the time may come when I can repay thee."

As the faithful servant was about to take departed him no longer; a he plunged into the forest, towards the Gothic spur of the Odenwald. Onwards to form their own plans for this startling emergency.

CHAPTER XV.

A TRAP INTO WHICH THE TRAPPERS MOST FATALLY FALL.

"Engelbert," spoke the Black Knight, "I will not impose upon you the duty of telling me what thou shouldst be exposed to every trial that in mind alone for me."

"Hold, my brother," cried Marburg, impulsively; "you do me much wrong by such an injunction; and I should be well aware that I made this only your perplexity outstripped your reason. And further: I do not believe that you are the sole aim of this bloody count. He hates me as much as he does you. He knows that his claim may be forgotten he must pay for the head of Agnes, and so he fears I may stand in his way as the lover of Constance. And yet you who love the maiden he would buy. Our rged lies to the west. I wish you to lead it. If there be a hazard in the way I can try how wide a path my good sword and lance will clear for me."

"Brave!" cried the Eagle, seizing his companion's hand as he spoke. "I have more my soul than I can tell. And what is left but the rolling of an avalanche. What say you, my brave fellow?" he added, turning to the two squires.

"There's like to be new danger in the way."

"I will be old danger when 'tis passed," said Hebert.

"And no danger at all if we will only think so," rejoined Bernard.

"Then on it is," pronounced our hero, with a triumphant look and tone. "I tell thee, Engelbert, these fellows forget themselves when they think to overcome us with such enemies. We should know that one stout arm can easily overcome a dozen weak ones. Ah—numbers hold not the power people generally think. Let me in this moment I would rather, alone, meet twelve Rudolfs of Baden than one Albert of Olfelden. I could cause them more easily. When the blood it up I can fight as long as there is a foeman to mark; and when a few have fallen the courage of the rest is on the wane."

"Ye—ye—but really," returned Engelbert, "but this Knight of Olfelden is a stout fellow, I have seen."

"Aye—and he must be the first disposed of if good Hilda's augury is to be fulfilled."

"I think there is no doubt on that score."

"Nor do I. So we will be prepared."

The squires were directed to keep close up; and having confining their shields and loosened their axes, the knights started on. At a distance of some three miles they came to an open space where a wide plain of short grass lay before them. Across that a road had at some former period occupied the place. It was surrounded on three sides by the forest, while the fourth was open to a steep ledge of rocks.

"If there are twelve of them," said Engelbert, "and they mean to attack us, they would natural to command a place as this, for in a narrower they could not so well operate with so many advantages."

The Black Knight had thought the same thing, and consequently they kept a cautious lookout. When they had reached the centre of the sandy plain they saw a movement in the wood ahead, and in a moment more a number of horsemen appeared. The distance was some three hundred yards. There was a single shout—a war-cry—came breaking through the air, and then the distant horsemen dashed from the thicket. They seemed to have determined upon their course before they were observed, for on they came—the

whole twelve—at full gallop, with their horses combed, and their manes flowing.

"Think, but they are in the quick work," remarked our host, as he closed his own visor and brought his lance down. "Dieu Gildofre is mine. Do you take that fellow next on his left. How for it?"

"*God and the Right!*" shouted the Crusaders, as they drew in their reins and started. Like two arrows they darted on, their accustomed bearing close upon them.

The enemies had evidently expected to take them unawares—to reach them ere they could fully prepare for the conflict, as they might have done the last time the crusaders were without warning, for had the latter been obliged to sustain the first buckling, entangle the one for the other, and make the other preparations, the others could have reached them on all this ground. But they had no such advantage, and when they came they came upon men ready to meet them.

At the first shock Sir Albert von Gilofre and his horse both rolled in the sand, and the Black Knight sent one of the fallen man's helm upon his lance-head. Engelbert, too, had borne down his opponent although he had spent a handful of spears. The Eagle's lance was now useless, for Gilofre's helm could not be taken off. Von Gerhard having pierced the head in the first charge, and Sir Albert, he not even the shattered weapon and drew his pendennes. As he did so he saw one of the stranger knights in the act of tearing down upon Richard with a couched lance. Richard's spear-head was lost—he needed his noble horse upon the flank, and fairly rode the fellow down. Then he turned upon him, for a second lance was aimed at himself, and as his horse leaped upon the back of the stranger, he ran his sword with the iron hoof upon his neck, he caught the coming lance upon his buckler, and at the same moment cleft the stranger's skull with his axe.

"*God and the Right!*" shouted the Black Eagle, as he heaved his horse after having thus felled the third knight.

"*God and Victory!*" answered Engelbert, turning from the hewing down of a burly knight.

"*God and Love for Father Richard!*" shouted a fourth knight, coming his lance upon our hero. The Eagle's lance ripped a hole in his mail at the same instant, and as he leaned free on, clearing only the tender air, the Crusader's axe descended upon his crest, crashing through the iron, and dividing the skull in two parts.

Seven of the enemies had already bitten the dust, and the five who were left seemed to hesitate. But it was only for the moment.

"*God and Lord Agen for Baden!*" one of them cried, and on the instant forgot his fear and his charge. One of them Bernard bore down with his axe; a second fell beneath Engelbert's heavy sword; the last two, Richard and Conrad, met with his buckler, and knocked aside another with his axe, ere the latter set upon him. The fifth passed not so easily by. On the instant that he knocked aside the last lance, the Black Knight was free for fighting, and while the foremost of his foemen was yet regaining the poise of his weapon, a sudden sweep of the broadsword laid him low. The victor was bound for the second one, but Robert acted for the brother, for the moment he put in time to split his head open as the master turned away the fallen's brains.

"*God and Agen for the Right!*" shouted the Black Unknown; and as with both eyes broke open the air, a single knight dashed away from the place as the leap of his horse's speed. And of the twelve, but one alone was left to tell of the strange tale!

And yet those two heroes of the Cross had not this day done anything which could add to the proof of their prowess. Those were the walls of Antioch, they had dash twoand-twenty Moslem knights who dashed their entrance into the city! And once in, the mounted knights were gone when the Knight of the Eagle had stopped to give water to a dying comrade, he was surrounded by a squadron of Egyptian warriors, all clad in mail. Alone, and beneath the hail of a dozen arrows, he cut his way through to his horse, and thence to the advance pace, slaying a score and six, with his battle-axe. Such were the deeds of the knights leagues had come to slay. And yet, had they known that the prowess of their opponents had been able to take them completely unawares, they might have retreated.

As soon as the spared soldiers had made good his escape, our hero leaped from his horse and went to where Sir Albert was. He found him dead, for he did not at first think he had slain him, as he was sure his hand had not touched his foe. He found, however, upon examination, that the sock was broken, the thread-like of the helm having proved stronger than was probable to its owner in that instance. As for the rest he knew they must be dead, for they had been struck with that intent.

"My brave fellows," said the Unknown, turning to the strangers, "you have done well. We owe you much."

"Shall I do for flattery," returned Robert, with a smile. "But yet we did all we could; though I wouldn't have given a pebble more for their heads if we hadn't been here. We owe you much for the first thing, almost."

"True—but does all 'round," added Engelbert; "though I must say, I don't much like the plan of having to pay one compliment after another."

Nor do I," rejoined the Eagle, thoughtfully. "I had hoped, when we reached our native land, that we might find a season of rest, but I hope we will come on long, as it is."

"There's no doubt," said Engelbert. "But is the mean time, what shall we do with these bodies?"

"We can only let them remain where they are."

"There's a little hamlet only three or four miles on," interposed Bernard. "Perhaps the people there will come out and bury them."

"No," said the leader. "Let the man who sent these persons to their death, also send out and bury them. I think that fellow who rode away will marry the owner."

The second not only probable, but the better way, and as the long and lofty party were once more in the saddle, and on their journey, the sun was almost at rest, when Bernard had spoken, and as it was near noon they resolved to stop where they were. They did not intend to encounter hostile until they reached Heidelberg, as they were not finding some one there with whom they could leave their own problem sufficiently safe.

Rudolf of Baden sat in his breakfast after the crusaders had gone, and then sought his armoury again. At the television in the early morning, but after leaving the door of the chamber, where he had listened to an important conversation, he had not taken time to ask many questions, as he was in haste to act a new trap for the game he sought; so he now stood to know all the particulars of the adventure, which had resulted in the death of the count.

Conrad gave them to him as he chose to tell them, being very careful that he colored every thing to make his own conduct appear brave and faithful.

"But didn't the knights detain you?" asked the count.

"O—yes—certainly."

"And they questioned you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And how did you explain the matter?"

"I had it all up upon the road, because, seeing as he was dead, he couldn't dispute me, you know. I told him the sandy was determined to have vengeance for the death of his brother, and that he told me if I didn't go and show him the way he'd serve me with the Pope's Bull. I really believe I was religiously inclined, and was afraid of being excommunicated, and so I carried him to the castle. But they are drove to get out."

"Very well," returned the count. "It can make little difference, save that I would like to know who destroyed."

"Betrayed you, sir?"

"Yes. I mean who placed them on their guard."

"Well, as for that matter," said Conrad, who was a fellow of some wit, "I should think you had given them cause enough for it. They have been troubled enough for it. They have eyes and ears. And you must remember that they have travelled and seen things, too."

"You may be right," said Rudolf, thoughtfully; and then he added, with some show of satisfaction, "Hagell very soon sent us a journey of greater length than they ever travelled before!"

After this the count said no more, but left them! But," he added, with a quick change of manner, "not a word of this to a living soul. If I learned the least word of your having said aught there are gone—gone home—gone anywhere. You know my power, sirrah!"

"I shall not be likely to, sir."

"Nor you, Conrad? You, Conrad, did they?"

"No, sir. The last I saw of them, they had dismounted, and were examining the work they had done."

Like a worn traveller the Count of Baden nods upon the table a distant look; but as the host was well up in his room, he remained there until near the noon hour. Then he left the castle on an invasion. You know how it ended.

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"Ah, Sir Henry," spoke the count, as the former stopped by the door, "you have taken an unwise course. You have been crying fast."

"Aye—I have, my lord," the knight returned, mechanically applying to his eyes. "But—"

"Did Sir Albert send you?"

"No, my lord—not of my own accord."

"And where are the rest?"

"I left them on the sandy plain of Lahiler!"

"Ah—did you come to two crumbire there?"

"Yes."

"And had you much trouble?"

"No, my lord—not trouble."

"Then you have not finished work; eh? But out with it. Tell me all. How was't done? How did you meet them? Were any of your company left slightest? Perhaps you have been wounded?"

"I don't think any of them are in pain, my lord."

"Well—that's good. I'm glad of that. Of course there couldn't have been much opportunity for harm to you. Did they see you? How did you make any resistance? Or did you run them down before they knew it?"

"No—certainly have done that, my lord. We couldn't have attacked two men behind—before of us."

"Well—twouldn't have been just the thing, I know. But then two enquires—did you kill them?"

"No, my lord."

"Well—I don't matter much. I didn't think to speak of them. And yet, I would rather have had them killed, but the chief object was not motion to trot off to Aix and see the emperor about certain matters. Rudolf of Engelbert will let my venture ship way with his old body and booked now, at present. Did you bury the bodies?"

"No, my lord."

"And do you know if Olkofen found any description of any kind about the body of the Black Knight?"

"He did not, my lord."

"Ah—did not? You now him search, did you?"

"He made no search, my lord."

"Make none? Well, I'll see to him strictly in charge, that he should make search on and about the body, and that no description of the man might be identified, could be found. And he knew how particular I was on this point. By Saint Paul! There may be that about the person of the Black Knight, I would not have——. But you may not know about that. Well, I'll look to the count, with a smile of sudden relief,—"you did well to let Sir Albert make the search after your left. Will he be along soon?"

"Sir Albert, you mean?"

"Certainly, I mean him. You wonder, sir, speak to the point. You have not told me how the affair terminated with that intent.

"Ah—they were slain quickly, my lord. The first had his plate of mail shot off, for I saw his head lop over like a wet rag."

"Good!"

"—and the third had his head split in two more manner."

"But you said the quarters were not killed."

"——which the fourth was killed by the tramp of a horse upon the neck."

"What mean you? You said once the quarters were not dead. Are you out of your senses, sir?"

"—The fifth and sixth, had their heads split open, and the seventh, the seventh was cut down by a sword; the eighth and ninth followed with their heads in equal parts; and I saw the tenth and eleventh bite the dust with the loss of their heads than ever found in way there before. I just caught a glimpse of the last operation, as I turned my horse's head and dashed off as fast as possible!"

"So has been injured," said the count, trembling with fearful apprehension. "They struck you on the head."

"No, no—not me, my lord," returned Sir Henry, with a dubious shake of the head. "If they had you wouldn't see me here, now."

"For some reason you have not told me the manager's face without speaking. He could not realize all that he dimly feared. 'Twas too much. 'Twas impossible.

"What is this strange riguarmie, sir?" he at length said. "Speak plainly."

"Then plainly, Sir Rudolf of Baden, my eleven companions, who went away from you this morning sound and well, are all dead now! Poor Albert of Olkofen was the first to fall. The Black Knight bore off his helmet upon his lance, rolling him and his horse both in the sand, and breaking his neck. One other—Adolf von Lauremeuse—was killed by being rode down and having his brain crushed beneath the iron hoof of the Unknown's horse. All the others—five of them—had their heads split from crown to bone!"

"And the Crusaders?" whispered the count.

"Were not even wounded."

"Sir Henry von Walden, you are jesting."

"*My* Lord of Baden, this is not a subject upon which I should be inclined to jest. But in earnest—those Crusaders are two hero and sword knights! Their good swords are proof, and as to would buckle a dagger. We had hidden in the wood upon the western side of the plain, and they had got half way across ere we set forth. We had supposed that to ride them down would be the work of a moment; but we started ere we had their stirrups were on, and their lances free. Of the first charge all must have seen an end. At the first charge the Eagle bore Sir Albert down as I have said, and with a most marvellous movement of his lance, dodged three opponents lance, and turned mine off upon his buckler But they are done for!"

The Count turned pale as death, and his teeth were set like a vice. Achille he gazed into the face of the man before him, and then he said, with a voice of bitterness in his tone—

"If I had sent one?"

"Hold, Sir Count," uttered von Walden, quickly. "You have told the present of the honor of those two knights, and, if I mistake not, Rudolf of Engelbert and Bernard of Gerhard. If they are gone—gone home—gone anywhere. You know my power, sirrah!"

"I shall not be likely to, sir."

"Nor you, Conrad? You, Conrad, did they?"

"No, sir. The last I saw of them, they had dismounted, and were examining the work they had done."

Like a worn traveller the Count of Baden nods upon the table a distant look; but as the host was well up in his room, he remained there until near the noon hour. Then he left the castle on an invasion. You know how it ended.

"Ah, Sir Henry," spoke the count, as the former stopped by the door, "you have taken an unwise course. You have been crying fast."

"Aye—I have, my lord," the knight returned, mechanically applying to his eyes. "But—"

"Did Sir Albert send you?"

"No, my lord—not of my own accord."

"And where are the rest?"

"I left them on the sandy plain of Lahiler!"

"Ah—did you come to two crumbire there?"

"Yes."

"And had you much trouble?"

"No, my lord—not trouble."

"Then you have not finished work; eh? But out with it. Tell me all. How was't done? How did you meet them? Were any of your company left slightest? Perhaps you have been wounded?"

"I don't think any of them are in pain, my lord."

"Well—that's good. I'm glad of that. Of course there couldn't have been much opportunity for harm to you. Did they see you? How did you make any resistance? Or did you run them down before they knew it?"

"No—certainly have done that, my lord. We couldn't have attacked two men behind—before of us."

"Well—twouldn't have been just the thing, I know. But then two enquires—did you kill them?"

"No, my lord."

"Well—I don't matter much. I didn't think to speak of them. And yet, I would rather have had them killed, but the chief object was not motion to trot off to Aix and see the emperor about certain matters. Rudolf of Engelbert will let my venture ship way with his old body and booked now, at present. Did you bury the bodies?"

"No, my lord."

"And do you know if Olkofen found any description of any kind about the body of the Black Knight?"

"He did not, my lord."

"Ah—did not? You now him search, did you?"

"He made no search, my lord."

"Make none? Well, I'll see to him strictly in charge, that he should make search on and about the body, and that no description of the man might be identified, could be found. And he knew how particular I was on this point. By Saint Paul! There may be that about the person of the Black Knight, I would not have——. But you may not know about that. Well, I'll look to the count, with a smile of sudden relief,—"you did well to let Sir Albert make the search after your left. Will he be along soon?"

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"He has been injured," said the count, trembling with fearful apprehension. "They struck you on the head."

"No, no—not me, my lord," returned Sir Henry, with a dubious shake of the head. "If they had you wouldn't see me here, now."

For some moments the count looked into the messenger's face without speaking. He could not realize all that he dimly feared. 'Twas too much. 'Twas impossible.

"What is this strange riguarmie, sir?" he at length said. "Speak plainly."

"Then plainly, Sir Rudolf of Baden, my eleven companions, who went away from you this morning sound and well, are all dead now! Poor Albert of Olkofen was the first to fall. The Black Knight bore off his helmet upon his lance, rolling him and his horse both in the sand, and breaking his neck. One other—Adolf von Lauremeuse—was killed by being rode down and having his brain crushed beneath the iron hoof of the Unknown's horse. All the others—five of them—had their heads split from crown to bone!"

"And the Crusaders?" whispered the count.

"Were not even wounded."

"Sir Henry von Walden, you are jesting."

"Then I tell thee, Rudolf of Baden, they cannot be trained! The impossible. Such men are no more be trained than I could betray myself!"

"I could swear that they meant to betray you, Sir Servant; though they talked of seeking the Emperor, and swore they'd marry our ladies love. They kissed each other like youngsters already married, and swore all sorts of eternal fidelity. The girls acted nothing for our sakes, while the men seemed them they had nothing to fear if they could only hold themselves free during the two magic weeks."

Gerhard look, several turns across the room, and when he stopped there was a look of determination upon his face which plainly told one who knew him that his mind was not irrevocably made up to something.

"By the power of my sword," he uttered, "I swear that this shall be nipped at once! We'll see if these conniving girls can thwart us thus! They shall be our wives without more delay!"

"That is what we ought to do," added Budon, with a sparkling eye.

"Aye—and it is what we shall do, trusted Ever-hard. "Only I shall know of the determination at once. Mind, Rudolf—I say at once!"

"You are right, sir. It must be so, or we may lose the game. Now, then, for the Eagle and the Lady Agnes; and of course I am master of my own house!"

"O—I am frank in this," the Will Knight returned, and in turn seems the master. "They shall have the morrow in which to prepare, and on the day after we'll make them ours!"

"That will be the time absolutely necessary to our unity," said Rudolf, by way of giving his complete and additional assent to every word and motion of the girls. "Let the Emperor know that our affairs are settled, and all will be slow to blame or molest us."

"Yes—I see; but I don't need that as an indispensable factor, for my mind is made up. I'll see my fair ward at once."

"And I will, too," said Rudolf.

Thus speaking the two quitted left the room. They went out together, and together found Conrad and Agnes. Blanche of Wurtemberg was busy about her household affairs. The last eyes of the two were gazing over the tops of the distant mountains, and the maidens were gazing out at the window when the knights entered. Constance trembled fearfully as she saw the looks which were cast upon her, for she guessed their meaning.

The men saluted themselves, and then Everhard spoke:

"I agree," he said, sternly and authoritatively, "what I have to say I will say at once, and in as few words as possible; and I desire you to understand that I speak from the most immovable purpose. You know the plan which has been cast my heart for years, and which was the dearest to your father. The matter has been postponed from time to time, but the plan is not to be put off no longer. The Count of Baden asks me for his bride, and I answer him now. You will give him your hand in marriage on the day after to-morrow?"

During the first of this speech Agnes had borne upon her face a defiant look; but as the last of it fell upon her ear the color departed from her cheeks, and she

stance. "Once more back in the massive old castle that was the home of my parents!"

"Never mind that now," interposed Agnes. "I suppose Rudolf means, if he gains me for a wife, to take me thither for its mistress."

"It is a noble castle, lady," remarked Hendrick. "The largest in Swabia; and I think the stoutest in the empire."

"I know all that. But do you think you can reach it to-night?"

The young armorer started, for this idea had not before entered his mind.

"Say, Hendrick," Agnes continued, "do you not think you could do it? The moon rises in less than half an hour, and will of course be up all night. The distance by the road is not over fifty miles, is it?"

"About fifty-four, lady. But I could do it with a change of horses. I should have to make two, and perhaps three, changes on the road; for it is a hard one, as you are aware."

"Oh! you shall have gold, as much as you can carry, if you will go. Overtake Engelbert and his companion, and tell them all. Tell them—But they will do what they think best when they know our situation. Tell them that there is no power here but death that can save us from the sacrifice."

Hendrick bowed his head and pondered awhile; and then he said,—

"We have horses in the glen—and some fleet and strong. *I will go!*"

"O—God bless you, good Hendrick! But stay not. Hasten for your life. They may have stopped at the castle, for the retainers there cannot know how their master Rudolf is at enmity with them. Go thither and seek them. Tell them as I have told you. Tell them that our secrets are all known. Tell them that no power——But you know all——"

"I know, lady. I will away at once; and if I do not reach Heidelberg until after they have started, I will take a fresh horse and follow."

"That's right, good Hendrick. Oh—you cannot help finding them, for all night while they are sleeping you will be on the road."

"Keep up stout hearts," said the young man, "for if the Black Knight can help you, he shall have the opportunity."

Hendrick Woldenburg received sufficient gold to pay for the use of extra horses, and then made his way from the castle at once, and when he reached his mother's cot, he told her he was going to do an errand for the ladies Agnes and Constance.

"But whither to-night?" the old lady asked.

"If I don't tell you, then when my lord comes to ask for me to-morrow you can simply tell him you know nothing about it."

Clotilda understood her son's meaning, and she was perfectly satisfied,—and the more so as she knew very well where he was bound.

In less than half an hour Hendrick had caught and equipped the best horse in the glen, and having armed himself with a sword, a light axe, and cross-bow, he set off. The moon was just lifting her round, genial face above the tree-tops as he started, and by the time he reached the plain, where the bodies of the dead knights yet lay, her light was full and sufficient.

Agnes and Constance walked out upon the wall back of the servant's department, and there they remained until they saw a dim form, like a horse and rider, cross a narrow opening, where the moonbeams fell, at a swift gallop.

"Thank God!" they ejaculated, in concert; and then they returned to their chamber.

On the morrow they kept their room until the hour for dinner. They saw a body of knights and men-at-arms riding through the glen, while before them were borne eleven corses on rough litters. They knew that these must be the ones whom their lovers had slain on the day before; and as the thought dwelt in their minds Agnes remarked that men who held such courage and prowess, would not be apt to lay claim to power which they did not possess. So they had reason for hope in the promise the Unknown had made.

"He surely spoke as though he had the power to overcome the claims of the count," she said, in conclusion.

"He did," rejoined Constance. "And he spoke very hopefully, too. Or—I should say, very confidently. I think he would not have said so merely to excite our hopes."

"Of course he would not."

And thus had the girls been engaged since morning in calling up every point upon which they could hang a hope; and also in wondering where Hendrick was at least once in every fifteen minutes. After having seen the cavalcade pass from the glen around behind a spur of rock which concealed the burial place from view, the anxious couple returned to the castle, and in the hall they were met by Everhard.

"Ah, my pretty ones, you are looking fresh and happy to-day," he said. "Are you making preparations for the important event of to-morrow?"

There was something in the calm, determined assurance with which the count spoke that drove all hope for the while from the minds of the maidens. In an instant they thought how many circumstances might combine to defeat their own plans, and also of the fearful advantage which their persecutors held over them. Everhard, stern and unyielding, seemed more powerful to them than ever before. What mystic power could the Unknown Crusader interpose? What was it possible for any one to do against the wilful lord of Wurtemburg?—against him who even laughed the emperor to scorn?

"My lord," answered Agnes, calmly, but with an expression of pain, "we have not thought yet of preparation."

"Have not, eh?"

"No, my lord, for we could not believe that you meant to force this thing through with such unseemly haste."

"Oho—you fancy we will put it off, do you?"

"We feel sure you will, sir. We cannot believe that you would——"

"Stop, stop, Agnes. You are but wasting time and words. I know not what preparation you think is necessary, nor do I care. Only let me assure you of this: your preparations will all be made on the morrow; and that, too, before noon; for ere the sun passes its meridian height you will be a wife!—I wish to hear no more. I mean just what I have said, and so shall it be done."

As soon as he had thus spoken the knight turned away, and the girls hastened to their chamber, where they threw themselves upon a couch, and clasped in each other's arms gave way to tears.

"Alas!" groaned Constance, "we only make our pain more severe by indulging these delusive hopes. There is no ground for the bright thought we have held. When the Black Knight said he could save us, he only meant that he would be here, and that he would claim your hand. Look at it as you will: Does it appear possible that he can hold any such power as we must have to free us from these fatal nuptials? Suppose he should come here with the Emperor in person, and the whole imperial army at his back, he could do nothing. My brother has the law on his side, and your guardian has the same. Oh! would that I had lain down with my mother long years ago, ere I had lived to love, and be thus crushed and abused!"

"You may be right with regard to the improbability of any release for us," replied Agnes, "but yet there can be no harm in holding on to hope. If we must fall into the terrible grave of life which has been digged for us, we shall have then nothing but sorrow and sadness for our lot. Oh—if there is the remotest shadow of a hope I will cling to it till the last moment."

At this juncture Calypso opened the door and entered.

"Ah—my poor young lambs," the old woman sympathizingly said, as she saw both the maidens in tears, "I know 'tis a terrible thing. I know all about it. But I wouldn't cry. It wont do ye no good. Perhaps after ye've been married a spell, and they see what two sweet, dear things ye are they'll be kind and loving. Don't ye think so?"

"Yes, Calypso. But you don't understand it."

"Yes, I do, my lady. I was married once myself, and I know all about it. It kind o' made me tremble at first, but in a very short time I found that a man wasn't such a hard thing to govern after all. Just you keep a cool, quiet tongue—keep your eyes open—find out your husband's weak points, and you've got him. I'll tell ye what," the old woman continued, gazing furtively about her, as though to assure herself that none others were near to hear the impotent revelation she was about to make, "after you are married, if ye find ye can't manage your husband just as ye want to, come to me. Come to me, and I'll give ye some instruction that'll be of use to ye."

Agnes could not help smiling at the good old servant's quaint ideas; and even Constance forgot for the while her pain.

"If I have the need I will certainly call upon you," said the former. "Your experience must be considerable in the art of married life."

"Aye—ye may well say so, my lady. No woman ever came through the siege better than I did. And mind ye, I had no trouble—not a bit. I did it just as easy as could be. When ye want to get the control of a man ye mustn't make much show about it, because if ye do he'll smell the mischief. No, no,—ye must do it easy like, and keep it to yourself."

"I'll remember, Calypso. But did you come to tell us only this?"

"O, no. Bless me, I forgot;—and master is in a great hurry, too. He's flying around like a mad goat. Hendrick has gone, and he can't find him, and he bade me come here and see if you knew where he was."

"How should we know where he is?" returned Constance.

"Sure enough," said Calypso. "Just what I thought when he told me to ask you, only I didn't say so. Of course you don't know where he's gone?"

"You can tell the count that we—that we—*do not* know where Hendrick is."

With this the old woman left, and then Constance turned to her companion.

"This is bad," she said. "If the count comes what shall we tell him? We cannot possibly deny all knowledge of Hendrick's whereabouts. Of course we have no more idea where he now is than Everhard himself."

"It is bad," returned Agnes, thoughtfully. "I would not tell a falsehood—I could not. I would not have falsehood upon my soul for life itself."

"Nor would I," added Constance, decidedly; "and that is why I felt that our position was so bad."

"If he does come," resumed Agnes, after a few moments of thought, "we have but one course to pursue. We will refuse to answer any further upon the subject."

But the maidens were not put to the test. They saw nothing more of Everhard during that day; and the only further message from him was by Calypso who came in a little after dark, bearing in her hand two magnificent tiaras of diamonds, each accompanied by a brooch and bracelet.

"This is for you," said the aged messenger, handing one of the sparkling tiaras, a brooch and a bracelet, to Agnes. "And this for you," handing the others to Constance. "And master bade me say that you would please him by wearing them to-morrow."

"That will do," said Agnes, who saw that Calypso was prepared for a long talk.

The woman took the hint, and left.

Neither of the girls spoke for a long while. They gazed first upon the gleaming stones, and then their eyes met. Once more the fear had come upon them, and with a deep groan Constance sank forward and pillowed her head upon her companion's bosom. Agnes clasped her arms about the fair form, and then raising her eyes to heaven she fervently uttered,—

"Great God, have mercy on us!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

READY FOR THE SACRIFICE.

Morning came, and with the first beams of the sun Agnes and Constance were at their window, which looked to the Northward and Eastward, straining their eyes over the dimly pencilled path in the forest. They had gazed all up and down the glen, and away into the dark wood; but they could see no living thing therein.

"If he found them at Heidelberg, they might have been here ere this," said Constance, tremulously.

"Certainly," responded Agnes. "But then you know how many things may have occurred to detain them. And then, Hendrick may not have found them at Heidelberg. He may have had to ride on beyond there. You know he did not get away until late, and may have had to ride on some distance farther than we had calculated upon."

"And do you hope still?" Constance of Baden asked, showing by her look and tone that all hope had gone from her bosom.

"Certainly I do," the noble heiress of Luxemburg answered. "The dying man has hope, while the vital spark remains. Still I will not deceive you, Constance. The more I think of the power which our present masters hold over us, the more doubt have I of any one to overcome it. Oh! what a word for you and me! *Master!* My soul starts up like a roused lion at the thought. *Master!* Oh, that Agnes of Luxemburg should have come to this!"

Constance trembled violently, but she made no reply. Together they stood there by the window and gazed off into the distant path until their eyes were tired and then they went back to their couch. This path followed the glen in a northerly and north-easterly direction, several miles ere it took its westerly turn across the mountains; and even as far as the eye could reach with power enough to distinguish a human form, there was an open waste across which the track lay that was visible from the windows of the castle.

"Will we make any preparation?" asked Constance, in a low, fearful whisper.

"I shall dress as usual," returned Agnes.

"And the gems they have sent?"

"We had better wear them. To refuse would only be an act of stubbornness without a purpose, and could do us no good, but might add to our sufferings. Let us do nothing that can only make our *masters* angry, without any possible result of good to ourselves."

"But the *word*, Agnes?—will you speak the word that is to make you the wife of a man whom you love not?"

"It will matter little whether we speak that word or not. Your brother can answer for you, and I know Everhard will assume the responsibility of answering for me."

"And this is the justice of our rulers."

"Aye," returned Agnes, bitterly: "They can bow to us at their sports, and do deeds of valor for us that we smile upon them; but when the solid, sacred good of a life-time is at stake, they care for us only as their own selfish purposes lead them. Let the question of power come up—let them know that a certain alliance will add to their strength in the field—and a human heart is of no account, at least with most of them."

They talked on—talked of hope and fear—of their lovers and of their tyrants, until the hour of breakfast was at hand. The great bell upon the tower gave the signal for the morning's meal, and ere long afterwards there came a rap upon the maidens' door. Agnes arose and opened it, and Everhard stood before her. He smiled as he met her gaze, and taking her hand, he said—

"You are looking fresh this morning, my sweet cousin; and you too, fair Constance. I trust your hearts are as light as your faces are bright. But come—I have sought you that you might have conduct to the breakfast hall. Will you take my arm?"

Without a word Agnes took one arm, and Constance the other, and thus they reached the table. The Count of Baden was already there, though not yet seated. He bowed, with a very broad smile upon his dark face, and hoped the ladies were well. But he needn't have said so, he added, for he could see by their looks that they were well. But he hoped that they might always be well.

Poor Agnes! And that man was to be her husband! The assassin—the murderer—the liar—and the drunkard! She gazed upon him, and she felt her heart grow sick within her. She could not do it! She could not live with such a curse upon her! She looked upon Everhard, and she thought if she could be in Constance's place she should be far less unhappy. The latter man was at least brave and noble, as nobleness went in those times. His wife would never have occasion to be ashamed of her husband; nor would she ever fear him, for it lay not within his power of heart to do harm to a female beyond the mere carrying out of great plans. Though he might sacrifice a heart, or a thousand hearts, upon the altar of legitimate power, yet he was not the man who could quarrel with a wife. If she was pleasant and agreeable, she would share his companionship; but if she was perverse and sour, she would see little or nothing of him.

But the other!—oh, what a fall! Rudolf of Baden to Everhard of Wurtemberg was as the venomous serpent of the tangled fen to the lion of the open forest! So said Agnes to herself as she gazed from one to the other. She was sick at heart and she could not eat. The very presence of Rudolf was as a magic spell of pain and agony upon her.

"How now, my sweet cousin?" cried Everhard, as Agnes arose from the table. "You look pale. What is it?"

"I am not well, my lord. Will you come to me when you have time?"

"Surely, I will.——What? And you too, Constance?"

"Pardon me, my lord, but I cannot see Agnes go away alone."

"By Saint Paul!" cried the Count of Baden, after the girls had gone, and bringing his fist down upon the table at the same time, "that is a plot! They mean to play sick!"

"For what, think you?" asked Everhard, quietly.

"In thoughts to put us off, to be sure! I know those over coy damsels well. They'll work energetically to have their will out."

"You must have some mercy upon the poor things, Rudolf. You cannot expect a maiden like Agnes of Luxemburg to marry you very joyfully."

"Ha! Everhard!"

"Easy, my good Lord of Baden. There is no need that you and I should dissemble. You know Agnes loves the Black Unknown, and also that she is aware of your questionable efforts to put him out of your way. And more still: I know she never liked you, and I think you have the same knowledge."

"But do you—a— By my halidom, Everhard, you speak strangely. I suppose you would hold your ward free now if you dared!"

"Peace, good Rudolf," spoke the host, only smiling at his guest's rising anger. "You should not speak so to me, for you know me better. You know I have spoken the word. We are so situated at present that we must combine our power. The emperor already plans our overthrow; but when he knows that all Baden, Luxemburg and Wurtemberg are combined against him, with the thousand knights we can call to us from the mountains, he will look more carefully. I respect him not. I love him not. He was once with us—for years a robber knight of the most unscrupulous kind; but now that he has been lifted to the imperial throne, he seeks to crush out his former companions. But he shall not do it; and as one of the means towards that end I have planned these marriages. I tell you plainly that under any other circumstances I would not urge Agnes to the union."

"You forget her father's will in this matter."

"No. He left her free to enter a convent if she chose. But fear not. She shall be your wife this day! I have said it!"

After this, some moments were passed in silence. As before, Rudolf's first impulse was to show some temper; but he quickly remembered how useless that would be, so he allowed his feelings to cool down.

"Has Hendrick come back yet?" he at length asked.

"No. I think he's got a flame in Stuttgart, and he has taken this opportunity to go and see her."

"What particular opportunity do you refer to?"

"Why—this wedding season. He knew we should not be off on any excursion, and that, as a natural consequence, his services would not be required."

Baden made no reply to this; and ere long afterwards he arose from the table and went out into the court, while the host sought his fair ward. He found her in her chamber, alone. She had been weeping, for her eyes were swollen, and there were traces of tears upon her cheeks. But she was calm now, but very pale.

"Well, Agnes," said the Wild Count, taking a seat as he spoke, "you bade me come to you, and here I am. What would you say?"

Agnes arose—stood for one moment gazing the count in the eye—and then she threw herself upon her knees.

"Sir Everhard," she cried, with her hands clasped, her eyes swimming, and her beautiful features wrought upon by the whole power of her pleading soul—"my guardian, my uncle—friend of my childhood, and companion and guide of my increasing years, by all the love thou didst ever bear me, I pray thee listen to my appeal. Oh! force me not into this unholy, unnatural union! For the love of God, break not my heart by thus binding me to one who is but a serpent in the path of life—a thief in the fold of humanity! Save me! oh, save me! and I will bless thee to the last hour of my life! Save me—save me from this terrible curse—and I will pray for thee with my deepest, holiest prayers! Oh! you cannot refuse me—you will not!"

"But—Agnes—thou knowest that the die is cast——"

"No! no! no!" interrupted the maiden, with increasing vehemence, "say not so! It cannot be so if you will it otherwise. Remember your love for my father—remember that my mother was your only sister! Oh, she loved thee, Everhard, and she died the more tranquilly because she thought thou would'st be kind to her child."

"And have I not been kind, Agnes? Have I not been all that you could have asked?"

"Yes—yes; God knows you have! And wilt thou not be kind still? Oh! save me from this! Save me if thou lovest me!"

"I do love thee, Agnes; and only thine one folly leads thee to look so fearfully upon this marriage."

"My own folly, Everhard? Oh! thou knowest 'tis not so. Look upon the man thou would'st have me wed! Oh! I dare not think of him, for fear my poor heart will hold such thoughts of madness as long years of penitence may not wash away! But spare me, my uncle—oh! spare me!"

Everhard saw that it would not do to prolong this scene, for his heart was touched, and his face began to show it. So he took the maiden by the hand, and as he lifted her to her feet as though she had been a mere child, he said, in a tone of such sternness and fixedness of purpose that no one could have hoped against it,—

"Agnes, my mind is made up! We have gone too far to recede. Every principle of interest and safety demands the union, and it must be made.—Stop! Not all the angels of Heaven could move me from my purpose. You must be the wife of Rudolf of Baden within two hours! And now be wise. Give over this vain fretting, and make up thy resolution for the fate you cannot avoid. Remember," he added, as he approached the door, "the power never had its birth that can save thee from the union we have fixed upon!—the union long contemplated by both you and myself, and by another—a union now made doubly necessary: Necessary in the fulfillment of your father's plans and hopes; and necessary, to the safety of our united houses! I have said, and you will now rest upon your own good sense."

Thus speaking, the Wild Count strode from the apartment, and Agnes of Luxemburg threw herself upon the couch in a passionate flood of tears. Thus Constance found her when she entered some time afterwards. The latter knew what had been her companion's purpose in the interview with Everhard, and the position in which she found her friend told her the result at once.

"Agnes," she whispered, laying her cheek against the tear-wet face, "and thus the last hope is gone!"

Quick as thought, Agnes started up at these words, and having gained the floor, she gazed wildly about her. Her eyes rested upon her sister in sorrow, and gradually she grew calm.

"Constance," she said, in a deep thrilling tone, "it is past! The last hope from our masters is gone! Aye—and they have seen me weep my last tear! Henceforth they shall see no more terror in my face to mock at. I have pondered long and seriously, and I know we cannot escape the doom! Let us meet it as becomes us. I may be made the wife of Rudolf of Baden—I may be bound to him as a slave is bound to his master—but he shall never know me as man knows a loving wife! There—am I not calm? Am I not firm of look?"

Constance shuddered as she gazed upon the ghastly features of her companion; and for a moment the fear presented itself that 'twas a maniac look she saw. But a faint smile dispelled the fear, and on the next moment the maidens were resting upon each other's bosom.

"We will be firm," whispered Agnes.

"As firm as steel," was the reply of Constance.

"What we cannot escape we must endure. I know their hearts, and they will only mock us if we show our anguish."

"Fear not, Agnes. My heart can hold all its agony. I am prepared for—death!"

"And I, too. 'Twill come soon enough if my prayers are answered. The grave lies next beyond the desecrated altar!"

"Even so! Farewell to joy and peace forever! God have mercy!"

"AMEN!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

DIAMOND DUST.

The demand for diamond dust within a few years has increased very materially, on account of the increased demand for all articles that are wrought by it, such as cameos, intaglios, etc. Recently, there has been a discovery made of the peculiar power of diamond dust upon steel; it gives the finest edge to all kinds of cutlery, and threatens to displace the hone of Hungary. It is well known that in cutting a diamond (the hardest substance in nature) the dust is placed on the teeth of the saw—to which it adheres, and thus permits the instrument to make its way through the gem. To this dust, too, is to be attributed solely the power of man to make brilliants from rough diamonds; from the dust is obtained the perfection of the geometrical symmetry which is one of the chief beauties of the mineral, and also that adamantine polish which nothing can injure or affect, save a substance of its own nature. The power of the diamond upon steel is remarkable: it is known to paralyze the magnet in some instances—and may there not be some peculiar operation upon steel with which philosophers have not yet taught us to be familiar? How is it that a diamond cast into a crucible of melted iron converts the latter into steel? Whatever may be said it is evident that the diamond dust for sharpening razors, knives and cutlery, is a novelty which is likely to command the attention of the public, whether or not it is agreed that there is anything *beyond* the superior hardness of the dust over the steel to give that keenness of edge that has surprised all who have used it.

DREAD OF INFAMY.—Infamy is so cutting an evil, that most persons who have any elevation of soul, think it worse than death. Those who have it not in their power to revenge it, often pine away in anguish, and loathe their being; and those who have, enjoy no rest till they have vengeance.

THE BIBLE BEFORE THE CLASSICS.

It is a very common thing for young men, fresh from their books, to boast of the superiority of the heathen poets, and to interlard their writings with quotations from their works. But if these budding young gentlemen did but know it, the BIBLE is as much superior to their favorite authors in purity, vitality and sublimity of style, as the latter are to ordinary poets. Let us take, for an illustration, the description of the horse in his glory, by Homer, Virgil, and Job. We will commence with Homer:

> "Freed from his keepers, thus with broken reins
> The wanton courser prances o'er the plains;
> Or in the pride of youth o'erleaps the mounds,
> And snuffs the females in forbidden grounds;
> Or seeks his watering in the well-known flood,
> To quench his thirst, and cool his fiery blood:
> He swims luxuriant in the liquid plain,
> And o'er his shoulders flows his waving mane;
> He neighs, he snorts, he bears his head on high,
> Before his ample chest the frothy waters fly."

Virgil's description is much fuller than the foregoing, which is only a simile; whereas Virgil professes to treat of the nature of the horse. It is thus admirably translated:

> "The fiery courser, when he hears from far
> The sprightly trumpets, and the shouts of war,
> Pricks up his ears, and trembling with delight,
> Shifts pace, and paws; and hopes the promis'd fight.
> On his right shoulder his thick mane reclin'd,
> Ruffles at speed, and dances in the wind.
> His horny hoofs are jetty black and round:
> His chin is double; starting, with a bound
> He turns the turf, and shakes the solid ground.
> Fire from his eyes, clouds from his nostrils flow:
> He bears his rider headlong on the foe."

Now follows that in the book of Job; which under all the disadvantages of having been written in a language little understood; of being expressed in phrases peculiar to a part of the world whose manner of thinking and speaking seems to us very uncouth; and, above all, of appearing in a prose translation; is, nevertheless, so transcendantly above the heathen descriptions, that hereby we may perceive how faint and languid the images are which are formed by mortal authors, when compared with that which is figured, as it were, just as it appears in the eye of the Creator. God speaking to Job asks him—

"Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength. He goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear, and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith amongst the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off; the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."

Here are all the great and sprightly images that thought can form of this generous beast, expressed in such force and vigor of style, as would have given the great wits of antiquity new laws for the sublime, had they been acquainted with these writings. We cannot but particularly observe, that whereas the classical poets chiefly endeavor to paint the outward figure, lineaments, and motions; the sacred poet makes all the beauties to flow from an inward principle in the creature he describes, and thereby gives great spirit and vivacity to his description. The following phrases and circumstances seem singularly remarkable:

"Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" Homer and Virgil mention nothing about the neck of the horse but his mane. The sacred author, by the bold figure of thunder, not only expresses the shaking of that remarkable beauty in the horse, and the flakes of hair which naturally suggest the idea of lightning: but likewise the violent agitation and force of the neck, which in the oriental tongues had been flatly expressed by a metaphor less than this.

"Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?" There is a twofold beauty in this expression which not only marks the courage of this beast, by asking if he can be scared? but likewise raises a noble image of his swiftness, by insinuating, that if he could be frighted, he would bound away with the nimbleness of a grasshopper.

"The glory of his nostrils is terrible." This is more strong and concise than that of Virgil, which yet is the noblest line that was ever written without inspiration:

> "And in his nostrils rolls collected fire."

"He rejoiceth in his strength—He mocketh at fear—neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet—He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha," are signs of courage, as we said before, flowing from an inward principle. There is a peculiar beauty in his "not believing it is the sound of the trumpet;" but when he was sure of it, and is "amongst the trumpets, he saith, Ha, ha;" he neighs, he rejoices. His docility is elegantly painted in his being unmoved at the "rattling quiver, the glittering spear, and the shield;" and is well imitated by Oppian (who undoubtedly read Job as well as Virgil) in his poem upon hunting:

> "How firm the managed war-horse keeps his ground,
> Nor breaks his order, tho' the trumpets sound!
> With fearless eye the glittering host surveys,
> And glares directly at the helmet's blaze!
> The master's word, the laws of war he knows,
> And when to stop, and when to charge the foes."

"He swalloweth the ground," is an expression for prodigious swiftness, in use among the Arabians, Job's countrymen, at this day. It is indeed the boldest and noblest of images for swiftness; nor have we met with anything that comes so near it as Pope's, in "Windsor Forest:"

> "The impatient courser pants in every vein,
> And pawing, seems to beat the distant plain;
> Hills, vales, and floods, appear already cross'd,
> And ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost."

"He smelleth the battle afar off," and what follows about the shouting, is a circumstance expressed with great spirit by Lucan:

> "So when the ring with joyful shouts resounds,
> With rage and pride the imprisoned courser bounds;
> He frets, he foams, he rends his idle rein;
> Springs o'er the fence, and head-long seeks the plain."

Thus incomparably superior is the sacred writer to the profane poets.

AN ECLIPSE IN PERSIA.

A traveller in Persia says, "One night there was an eclipse of the moon, and all the pots, pans, and other sonorous instruments that could be found in Gheelann, were in requisition to frighten away the beast which was supposed to be devouring the planet. A great deal of gunpowder was also expended, and one might easily have imagined that the town was attacked. Presently our cook, Ismael, commenced a tremendous assault upon a large saucepan, and the other servants discharged their pistols and rifles, much to the assistance of the good cause. At last, after having continued this din for upwards of two hours, the inhabitants retired to rest triumphant, as the beast was effectually alarmed, and had left the moon precisely as he had found it, and round and bright as ever."

BONDAGE OF THE PASSIONS.—The man who violently hates or ardently loves, cannot avoid being in some degree a slave to the person detested or adored.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 3.

OUR ONLY TERMS.—Single copies, $2 per annum; two copies, $3; four copies, $5; eight copies, $12; and a club of ten copies, and one extra copy, to the person who sends the club, $20. Any person who sends us $12 for a club of eight copies, and one extra copy, will be entitled to a copy free. It will be useless for parties to write us for terms for a less number than eight copies, or to send us less than twenty cents for the Ledger, (including postage.) We do not want any clubs formed at less than these terms. We do not want any clubs formed in towns where there are newspaper agents, unless the inducements in advance are satisfactory to us. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year.

NO TRAVELING AGENTS.—We employ no traveling agents. If any party presents himself to act as an agent for us, you may set him down as a swindler. The best way to get our paper is at the book and periodical stores; but if you happen not to reside within reach of one, then you can send us your money, and we will mail it to you.

WE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE for all money sent us in accordance with these terms, and not otherwise. But we prefer to get a letter registered at any post-office—and the expense for postage will be refunded to you.

REJECTED MANUSCRIPTS.—We will not return rejected manuscripts.

FRUITS OF INFIDELITY.

Some of the readers will be tempted to forgotten the much talked of and written about case of the murderess Manninge, who were executed in London a few years ago. The man confessed his share in the crime, as an accessory, and his confession indicated a wide divergence in the general relation between infidelity and crime. Manninge, who was a believer in the Supreme Being, was an unwilling party to the deed for which he lost his life, while his wife, the chief perpetrator of the crime, was an avowed atheist. Running related that when he asked his wife what would become of her soul if she committed an act of murder, she replied:—"It's time to end; after we are dead we are like a lump of clay, and there is an end to everything." It is hard to believe that an intelligent moral being can go so far as to deny the existence of God, and of eternal laws or principles in His government of the Universe, but it is not difficult to believe that it melts down the will, dulls the moral sensibilities of God and a Divine government, above and beyond all human governments, and removes the most powerful restraint against the indulgence of evil passions and the commission of crime.

France in her last history, reveals how far a nation, denying God and cultivating religion, can plunge itself into an abyss of the most appalling vice and crime. And upon the same principle that a nation, cut away from all allegiance to its own impulses, becomes a work of depravity and horror, an individual, in the sphere of his own capacity, sees a darker end. Peace repeating over her experiment of rejecting God, has come to acknowledge helps that faith in a Supreme Being and a Divine Government, before whom the acts of men and nations must be perpetual review, and from whose judgment no human deed can escape, is vital to the strength, prosperity, and happiness of nations and men. Locomotive says, that for the safety and welfare of society belief in God must be not merely a conception, a conviction, a manifest truth, but a law, an eternal law—a government. Without this idea of recognition of a Supreme Father and Governor, a people will be absorbed in selfishness, and can have no sense of social duties, and no social nor national virtues. Infidelity which destroys God, also destroys humanity.

An examination of the records of crime, and of the characters and sentiments of criminals, leads irresistibly to the conviction that the vast amount of crime, in the worst forms, results from the infidelity of the perpetrators—from their sense of relief to know that there is a God, and a Divine Government, and that the end, beyond the grave, is not to be a Government in future states of being. His Maniage, disbelieving in God, and the immortality of the soul, thought and could not be guilty of murder so as to escape the penalties of human laws. The record Herald justly says that the murderer wants escape punishment from man this side of the grave. Who cannot see the degradation of moral restraints was thus lost sight of, and that in regarding life as but a brief, unlegislatable spark, she set little value on that of others' victim, conquered with what it would have seemed had she believed in the eternity to which she and every life must be the undergoing eye of a just God—in father. This is a matter that cannot be too much considered, and the more it is examined, the stronger reason every intelligent moral being will find for having a profound conception of the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and a paramount Divine Government, as the best assistor of individual and national virtue.

INVESTIGATION.

Incendiarism is just now carried on to a frightful extent in the city, and every one who is in a chuck is pregnant, but a few summary and awful examples being made. There is not a night we place our heads upon our pillows, but we are aroused by the alarm of fire. In other countries such is not the case; in the large cities of the world. London, it is rarely that a conflagration of any magnitude occurs, and when it does, it is usually by chance without the slightest token, but in New York it is a constant visitor; the fire department in it is mighty danger of feeding his dwelling wrapped in flames about him, by the torch of the incendiary, and if it escape with life, perhaps it is only to become the victim of poverty. Crime of every species exists; and we are always with a fearless and daring front, knowing that it is safe from the laity in the administration of our laws, or that the avenue of escape can be easily procured by the plentiful distribution of favor.

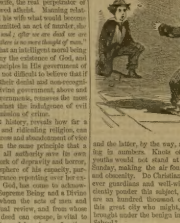
MRS. SOUTHWORTH'S STARTLER.—In another column, our readers will find a calm, dignified and convincing statement by Mrs. Southworth, in answer to her withdrawal from the Saturday Reading Post, and the charges of the proprietor while managing that paper, on her, because she declined to write for the Saturday Reading paper, as engagement with the Ledger. Had we been in Mrs. Southworth's place, we should have been dignified under provocation, by taking the slightest notice of them, but when a lady feels it expedient to expose the misrepresentations of men who, so long as they could get her to write for them, extolled her productions, but now, seeing she is engaged to write only for the Ledger, would low, to cheerfully yield her the use of our columns to her defense, like the noble knight, who has certainly executed the task in the most delicate and unexplainable, as well as triumphant manner.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The influence of Sabbath Schools upon the mental and moral discipline of society, can never be over-estimated. Apart from the religious sentiments which are connected, they work an incalculable good in training the mind to habits of thought and reflection, and giving systematic and healthy action to its tendencies and powers. Of the great statesmen of our country, most have been associated with Sabbath Schools. Who can tell how mightily the lives and actions of these great beacon lights were stimulated by such training.

The Sabbath School is one of the happiest and dearest ideas that has been evolved by Christianity. It is purely a Christian institution, seeking to save and bless the world, and is the very breath of the good, the beautiful, and the true. No one need fear a combination of its lofty moral influences, through any sectarianism the child may receive from its parents, or may lead their children to the Sabbath School of the church they sympathize with. It is not an exclusive or dictatorial institution. The Catholic and the Protestant—Presbyterian, Baptists, Methodists, Quakers and Unitarians, have established and enforced it with the same hope and faith in its beneficence.

Apart from the stimulating influence it exerts, it exerts a moral wall around society, by bringing the rising generation in contact with high and ennobling principles. It commences on the Sabbath to the young, as well as to the old. It saves childhood and youth from evil habits, engendered by non-observance of the Sabbath and a carelessness of its purposes and teachings. And there was never given a right appreciation of this institution, simply as a social or State policy, for the temporal weal of society and nations, and always connected with the Sabbath by dog-fighters and pump-pickers.



and the latter, by the way, are constantly increasing in numbers. Knots of idle and depraved youths would not stand at the street-corners on Sunday, nodding, as they do, with listlessness and obscenity. Do Christian, do parents, or whatever guardians and workers of society, think sufficiently ponder this subject, and reflect that there are six hundred thousand children and youth in this great city who ought, and should, be in all lovingly under the benign influence of the Sabbath school?

IS IT A CURSE!

Awhile ago, we issued an aristocratic declare of one of our up-town fashionable stores, in an address to an aspiring applicant for a place, that she declare that the cheap, independent press was a curse to society—that it was the body of the devil—such also what applied then for common labor. There were, we are glad to say, among the many persons who had the scorn and manliness to scorn both the speaker and his sentiments, which they did in a most emphatic manner. Of all the vocations, dishonest things attending to society, this miserable, sneering, whispering, sprung from filth and fraud, and corrupt as it is worthless and shallow, is the most degrading and contemptible. The wretch who lies to the naked, virtue, or whatever is intrinsically excellent in man, is true and agreeable to the spirit of the American people, and the genius of the Republic in its possession; but this canting of superiority because of a little more money invested in other property, is held by the men of society, in only worthy universal derision.

No wonder these bogus nobility deprecate the influence of the cheap, independent press—which has a habit of looking after the rights of the poor—reveal that the earth may bring forth its fruits, and they are but the stewards of God's bounty to man, and that with the intelligence which it is their pleasure and right to diffuse among the masses, are, in the sight of God and humanity, not a whit lower or less than kings, cotton lords, or commercial nabobs. Because of this kind feeling for the aristocrats, who cannot bear to have the fraud stripped from their pretensions, and who will not trust with the intelligent newspaper-reading masses. The accumulation of wealth is certainly a fact, but not made a mountain to obscure and crush the less fortunate, but it gives us just title to nobility.

"The rich is the poor's treasury,
The man's the gold for all that."

A WORD TO THE WISE.

Some of our daily journals are in the habit of denouncing the publication of stories and novelties in weekly papers; under the plea that they make the people read. They say it is a shame to encircle the coarse and immoral stories which a certain class of readers delight in. Whatever force this complaint is totally inapplicable to the pure and high-toned productions which are so much appreciated by the respectable weekly press. There is a class of "literature," however, that is unquestionably the most pernicious that ever spread with a surface ought to attend to its suppression, as in that case their "culture of Sabbath" would be confined to their own address. We refer to the numerous reports of criminal trials for crimes unmentionable in a high-toned family paper like the Ledger, with which the daily journals so eagerly and so habitually pander their columns. How the head of a family can table family can permit daily papers that make it a practice to publish these infernal reports to be introduced into his house, is more than we can account for. It ought not to be.

OUR PAPER.—Every one who has enjoyed the success of the Ledger by the friends must have felt happier and better for its perusal. To instruct, to amuse, to ameliorate a high standard of purity and life, and to cherish all the better feelings of the heart, is its mission. Nothing is admitted to its pages that can sound the feelings of the most sensitive, or call a blush to the cheek of the most modest. Children may read it with pleasure and profit, and we wish to make the oldest, wisest and best feel the responsibility of their obligations to us for many pleasant, well-spent hours.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

TARTHIA TROTT'S SOLILOQUY—OVER HER TEA.

Such also no married man—not yet a) achieving my their happiness to the parties; can would think nobody else was of any account. I have been forever sorry that I ever married. I have seen scores of worse-looking women, with babies in their arms, such a fuss as married women make! See them on a journey—in the cars, taking care of their darling bonnets, and laying their babies in such a provokingly confiding way on their husbands' shoulders, and proceeding to go to sleep. A husband is well enough, I suppose, but I have managed to live fort——I mean thirty years without one. Then they say that married women never serve their good looks much longer than single ones—now, that is a joke—all my women who lived such a hurry-skurrying life—but there's no use in arguing the point; everybody knows how plump, and fresh-looking, and rosy-cheeked single girls are; not that I am an old maid—and speaking of that, I'd like to inquire where's the necessity of calling every unmarried woman an old maid, I'm single, and I'm not old; I were several years they might talk; and I am not "set" in my ways either. To be sure, always when I return from anything, I put everything away, but I'm a natural tissue paper; and I carry my fingers as straight as I can, without getting the cramp, but I suppose then should wear my gloves out; and I put my shoes side by side, near an open window at night, in a chair, as I always observed my mother do before getting into bed, to see if the seam is exactly in the middle; but then, I'm not a married maid, and nobody has any right to call me so. I'll tell you what I'd like to marry—I'd like a man. Some women take up with any thing, and something ask the men to marry me, or what I consider a good. Not that I would marry any old or any millinery business and took up making gentlemen's socks, for instance, and never be seen, but I am married. She invented a new way to fasten socks, just for an excuse to have the girls come and see how to put them round their necks; that's the way she became Mrs. Spring. Then there was Mrs. Hives, she was married to a dead set of a husband, and got him, too! I hope he may never remind her of it, for I'm sure I never dream don't suit him; that's all I have to say. And Mrs. Gore, by the bye, another husband; she'd not even cry on our rosy young sexton; and pretended she had her breast-pin, in church, of a Sunday, and got him to look for it, and a long search they made of it, too. Do you think, I, Tabitha Trott, were ever reduced to such tricks?—Never! I had rather live an old maid till I died up like a parcel of perfumery, and blow away for want of somebody to hold me. Good gracious! if there isn't deacon Sharp, the widower, a-coming to tea! I must run and tell poltiness to run down and inquire after the dear children. FANNY FERN.

EXHORTATION.

Among the virtues we may say
The best of us wish thinkly—
Be wise, be just, be kind to your pay,
And judge your brother kindly.

Help back into the path of right,
Not many him with your censor,
Where'er you find a fallen brother,
His case yourself the better. ALICE CARY.

TO ALL INTERESTED.

As, in consequence of my final withdrawal from all connection with the Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post, its Editors have published a statement which, as a matter of justice to myself with that paper in a false aspect, I proceed to set the matter right before the public by a brief but entire correspondence upon the subject—preceding that having been imperformed by Mr. Henry Peterson to write a statement for the Post, I have no control and consequently promise to do so. The letters tell the rest.

Yours, truly, E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, January 26th, 1857.

DEAR MR. PETERSON:—I have just received your letter, before this date furnished you with a short narrative. Mr. Childs, Mr. Peterson, and myself, were present when the terms of Mrs. Southworth's contract were read and I am not something better; I feel the first of February as hard, and I am sure you remember that I said, "Mrs. Southworth, some months ago, began to take effect. Its success precluded the idea of a publishing revolution of any other paper; therefore it becomes my duty to recount you to withdraw from the Post, and to give you the following brief notice, but perhaps, I remain,

Yours, respectfully,
EDGAR A. POE, 8 SOUTHWOURN.

To this communication I received the following rude reply:

[*In Mrs. Evans D. E. N. Southworth.*]

PHILADELPHIA, Saturday, Feb. 9, 1857.

We had no written agreement with Mrs. Southworth, but the conditions of her withdrawal from the Post as part of the bond—especially one so long connected with us. We have been informed that she has written only for the Ledger, and that, too, in accordance with the terms of her contract. Mr. Peterson, then a party of a certain length was made known to us, and we were informed that she would write for the Ledger. Under these circumstances we do not think ourselves under any further obligations to her.

Respectfully,
HENRY PETERSON.

The following letter was written by me to the Post, which kept my name before the public for a short time:

[*To Henry Peterson, Ed. the Post.*]

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 10, 1857.

DEAR MR. PETERSON:—My contract with the Ledger gives him the right to make the announcement of my withdrawal from the Post, and I therefore decline to do so.

Yours, truly,
E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

The following is my correspondence:

I never purposely injured the Post, yet in consequence of this, my determined withdrawal from it, Messrs. Childs and Peterson published a false statement in the Post, have cunningly and covertly insulted my truthfulness as a woman, and my reputation as a writer. Any one may see at once the motive of the attack the pair of gentlemen have made upon a woman who never injured them, unless she has inadvertently done so in leaving the Post for the Ledger.

Now, let the public compare the above correspondence with the statement made by Messrs Deacon and Peterson, and draw their own conclusions.

Yours, D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

Prospect Cottage, April 16th, 1857.

A BAD FASHION.

It has become the fashion now-a-days to abuse, and depreciate, and renounce almost the entire good world in which we live. It is a bad fashion, and I wish I could see any signs of its going out. I, for one, confess that even my dreams are based upon the possibilities of this dim speck that men call earth. I would not have wings grow upon my shoulders to-day nor to-morrow, if a wish could produce them; why I were married, I have become being, when in lonely condition, very happily adapted to my sense.

A fine epigrage is desirable enough, but may be obtained within the limits of this visible, dismal world. I would it were be denied us, that we can manage very well without it. There is no need that we should travel very far, to learn a good deal, most of us—the grass and flowers in our dooryards—the weeds on the scant hill, putting on and taking off their green dresses, nodding to the winds, and all day making love to the twilight—the birds mating and building their cosy little homes without mounting-lines, without study of architecture—all these have a great deal to say to us when we might hear with profit.

Our neighbor that we look down upon, because he wears wooden shoes or wooden steps, perhaps, has seen sights and thought thoughts that we have not seen nor imagined. If we should show him a little friendliness, he would give us much payment as all human coin could not buy for us. I think there would be less cutlery against the world if we were it to live in it—less pining for great spectacles and shows if we had eyes to see the pictures that are painted anew for us every day in the morning and evening sky.

Ah! me, there is many a Peter Bell of whom it might be said, "A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

If it were not for the good interpreters that here and there stand between the dull, grovelling herd and nature; the marvel of her influence, the charm of her every-day loveliness would be all unrecognized.

"On a fair prospect some have looked
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as standstill as the scene
On which they stared. Themselves were gone."

But the many, I am afraid, have looked on fair prospects, and have outseen them all so. And the reason is, that they see only mouth, the eating of our capacities.

I meet very often young men and women careless of health, careless of pleasure—of the world around all it can give, in fact, and I know of no sadder sight. They are fretful and peevish, melancholy and listless by turns—looking out upon the world unsatisfied, and complain of it less than the chaff of vanity. This is all wrong and needless evil. I think, for it arises, in nine cases out of ten, from absence of occupation, and a luxurious breeding which excludes healthful exercise, and encourages dissipation of body as well as of mind.

best medicine for you is the work-bill, at fifty cents a day."

I think of several idle, moping, discontented women among my acquaintance, for whom I believe this novel prescription would prove highly beneficial. But, oh! do not, for the life of you, they ask, when they come to see me; "are you bound to deal with the old commercials? Don't really is nothing worth living for any more?"

Yes, there are of unpredictable mixes, and one that is on the increase among us is that which wears mortality as a burden. The fresh of countless individuals is actually consumed by yearning for a better life, as if God would ever build up a beautiful spiritual life upon the unhealthy, sickly foundations they are living here.

We ourselves have something to do; and if we don't do it, and won't do it, so much the worse for us, that is all. We can't have happiness crammed down our throats, and we don't. There is a certain wilful processes; and the simplest and easiest method of getting good that I know of, is doing good. We do not estimate properly the treasures and pleasures of this world. We forget the mesh, and the fish that swims through it. We are so much complain that the one has lost its luster, and the other its zest: the world is not properly tended; and we defend ourselves by our vulgar greediness and rudeness.

The naive will keep in the hollow—wallow in the mire, and grovel and bite, no matter what vicious habits it does; and the nobler and serener soul and women will keep in the dark, bug their little sorrows, and drag down to their level those who live off, from, and out of, every healthful nature that they come in contact with—instead of trying to wrap itself about them, but they will not see it—the eczema of the air stand cool and open, but the many hungry generation—the thirsty ones—live by their very doors, but they will not wash and be clean.

It is not heaven they desire, if they only knew it, but a warm, good appreciation of the excellent beauty of this present world. ALICE CARY.

GOVERNESS.—Go, thoughtless children of wealth! go where funeral-piles mark the resting-place of your ancestry! Go where sculptured effigies and lonely mausoleums rear side by side! Go—pause—reflect—will ye, dare ye oppress the poor!

CURRENT ITEMS.

A GENTLEMAN named Rogers, living near Philadelphia, hearing a noise among his poultry one day, armed himself with a gun, and ran into the yard to see what was the matter. On entering at the poultry yard he discovered that a large black snake had stolen a nest and was carrying away one by one to feed on his eggs. After considerable fluttering and clucking, the old hen died, but not by a hot gun-shot, aimed by the servant, apparently for the purpose of rescuing the hen, and pierced him in the body. He soon began to show signs of discomfort, and finally released his intended victim and fled; but unfortunately for him, he came up with a great cackling and crowing of triumph, and then gathered around their rescued companion, and made a great fuss over the occasion.

An Ohio paper gives an account of a dreadful accident that recently occurred in a "large family" in that State. A number of persons were engaged in making sugar, and several large kettles of the syrup were boiling over the fire. One of the kettles, containing about ten gallons of the boiling mixture, was tossed on an upright revolving shaft, and the machinery was put in motion, when one corner of the kettle came against the frame work, and caused the other corner to spring suddenly out, and the whole contents of the kettle were emptied over the unfortunate man who was standing near.

A YOUNG MAN named Rogan recently died in Albany from poison communicated, from hides he was handling, through a scratch on his hand. At the time he could be enticed while his hands were soiled by the hides. The scratch was on the back of the hand, and the hand, and then his body as he down as his waist. At the time of his death the poison had reached his head, and the swelling on his face was dreadfully distorted, and he suffered the most agonizing pain.

THE New York Crystal Palace which cost $750,000, is now offered for sale at $250,000. Let the city buy the Palace and preserve it as the handsomest building in the city, and the most suitable for the purposes for which it was designed. Let the city buy it, or if it can't we may be searched for a purchaser. It is a shame to let it go to ruin.

THE Presidential election has sent on foot in Georgia a movement to divide that State into two States, the dividing line to run from Augusta to Savannah, and the last that continued would be of sufficient extent to make a State, and the remainder would be greatly improved. The enterprise will doubtless be looked upon with favor by the majority of the people, as in that case they can come in for a share of the honors.

THE Legislature of Illinois, in the western part of this State, a few days since ran away with another man's wife; but in the hurry of departure left behind the book in his—other pantaloons," containing $650, which the gentleman had just received from the Treasurer of Sangamon county, and he thinks he made a capital bargain.

KING HARRIS, of Nigeria, the banker-monarch of Islip, has conferred the Cross of Francis Lo—ble, highest decoration of the Order of Leopold, upon Mr. Bonner, for having devised a new instrument of torture, which at last accounts was being used with the most satisfactory results.

SERGEANT LOUIS ARMAND, of the First Regiment New York Volunteers, recently died, much lamented, at Philadelphia, from the lingering effects of a severe wound received in the battle of Monterey, where he behaved with great gallantry.

IT is said that over one million pounds of maple sugar have been made this year in Chautauqua county alone.

WIT AND HUMOR.

THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN.—The following may be addressed as just a few of the privileged Rights of Women—to be kissed when she pleases, to be left when she likes, to be told, and obeyed by the Master of the House. Also, she always may be drawn to so peculiar Rights that Woman possesses—namely, to change her mind, and to have always the last word, more than Man, viz.: the Hour of Hospitality and the Rites of Sepulture. [Ah, but, Mr. Punch, you forget that the Hymen (as whimsy our police express) left to poor Woman's figure since it was made by Eve.—ED.]

A LADY in this city told a freshly imported servant-maid to set the table "two ways" for dinner. She brought tones, which she (the lady) attended to a visitor. Upon returning to the dining room, she saw that the girl had cut off "one pair" sure enough, and each pair in a separate place. The poor girl, by the way, had been in this country (to whom her mistress had sent her for a prescription) just about two days, and was not to be blamed for the odd hair mistress were to be taken three times a day."

A LADY asked a little boy, who was playing with a dandelion that, during the course of his long existence, he must have had a great deal of fun. "Yes," answered the boy, "more than 100 umbrellas! Experience has taught him now, however, that he can't tell exactly the number of days he has, as long as he lives another umbrella." He classifies umbrellas with days, and considers that the more umbrellas he has the profit, much less the better.

THE Secretary of the Treasury is pleased the honorable court and gentlemen of the jury, the defendant in this case is charged with stealing a pig. It is true, the pig fled amongst from the wild wilderness, with all the terrible fierceness of the wild animals, but the pig was not to be found, and therefore my brilliance shows by the nobler—and the pig is not to be found.

A SCHOOL-MASTER, examining his class in mathematics, asked them, during the course of his long existence, he must have had a great deal of fun. "Yes," answered the boy, "more than 100 umbrellas! Experience has taught him now, however, that he can't tell exactly the number of days he has, as long as he lives another umbrella." He classifies umbrellas with days, and considers that the more umbrellas he has the profit, much less the better

"SO TIENI DIED, AND OMRI REIGNED."

1st of Kings, 16th and 22nd.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

The high mount they rebuild at rule,
And valley ward at home and school
Their children train to love and fear.
When he should his own son see,
The years roll'd on, he struck his tent,
And forth to seek his future rest,
His passing thorns his way-cakes'd,
And rent into the soil around.
With tenfold toil his sinews knit,
And all the past reward denied,
While hate's bitterness exclaimed,
Though Tibni died, yet Omri reigned.

By Heaven's aches the mouth has sat,
And hardly endured, and bowed his head
Till to the frenzy of despair
He runs and broke the tyrant's snare,
But next, with nature sear'd and cold,
His manhood bear's to lose of gold,
Till sleepless care and baneful art
Have made his life a long-drawn sigh,
Still trampling down with sunless heart
All generous feeling for him
All such virtue was his pleasure pain'd,
If Tibni died, or Omri reigned.

So, when we quail with sorrow's woe
Or pine with hope that's fled,
Patient us not, the God of peace
To take another in his place,
And changing but the date's same,
Still yield to vanity and disease,
Even like the Hebrew's weary way
In fields of blood, a tyrant's sway
Yet tent, by unrelenting fate all
Another despot in his stead,
Else seldom from an ancestor gain'd,
For Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

THE WIFE'S CONQUEST.

A TALE OF MYSTERY AND RETRIBUTION.

BY WILLIAM HENRY SIDNEY.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER III.

The young fugitive from the French ship found a happy home, and confiding and loving hearts, beneath the roof of Ambrose the fisherman. Every day made him dearer to them, and when a month had passed without any inquiries having been made about him, they began to feel that God had sent him to them to be their child, and so each their hearts regarded him.

As for his lad, Mirvier, he could not express sufficiently his gratitude to his preserver, and by a hundred ways of love he sought to please them. He was a boy formed by nature to be active and gentleness of all around him. Even the old skipper, gray-bearded, hard-fisted old man never known to love anything but his smack, took kindly to him, and taught him how to distinguish the ropes, the names of the sails, and of all other parts of the vessel. He also taught him to steer, to row, to hail a hook, and even to splice.

With cheerfulness, and a willing heart, Vivien learned all these things, and became expert in all that was taught him. Ambrose taught him English every evening, sealed up the door after the day's work, and Mary piled her needle with double diligence, to make his clothes the one care, but coarse and suited to their station. His beauty, his sweetness of temper, his fearlessness, young as he was, his docility and readiness to oblige them, made them so proud of him, and as we upon them humble people, that to have parted with him, after he had been with them the first month would have been one of the deepest afflictions that could befall them both.

Heaven has given him to us, Ambrose, and I daily pray that we may be permitted to keep him as our child."

Both, perhaps," he said to her, "Mary, my wife, dear, we ought not so to pray; for perhaps he has a mourning mother, from whom we have no way him! If we love him so, how must his parents love him, though he is not?"

"I do not think of them, Ambrose, in my own selfish love for the dear, manly, little boy. I would be very reluctant to give him up even to his mother; yet I will try and pray for the future, that his mother may be found, and that God would restore him to her embrace."

"That is the better prayer, wife! But I have no idea that his parents are poor or be known."

"Ought not some steps be taken to find them, husband? It would not be right to keep a child—"

"Our silence may be the child's safety, and preservation from the foes who seek his life. If we should make known every where, in the newspapers, perhaps before the poor child hear of it, the enemies might be upon our unprotected home and treat him from us. For those who will be secret and silent, and trust to God in his own good time to unfold the mystery which surrounds him. It must have been, from all I can understand, (with my poor French), when he was five or five years old, he was carried off from that handsome home he describes, to England; and that at least, four or five years, he has been in the hands of cruel people, hired to keep him from France; but who at last seemed to have got weary of their charge, and resolved to destroy him. But Heaven on that night sent us to his rescue, and I accept with gratitude, the gift, as from above. If we make known his safety, they will know it, who seek his life, and he is lost!"

"I will keep it secret as my own soul, dear Ambrose. God grant it!"

"It a sun who never speaks but when he can't help it. Besides, he knows my story, and would defend the boy with his life, I doubt not."

"Would he seem by Mr. Shoreham, when you landed there, the night you came with him?" she asked, timidly.

"Perhaps so," but he said no attention to him, and perhaps supposed it was the boy, Mark Skelton. But I saw the pretty child looked, looking closely at him and that he looked closely at her, with eyes full of admiration and pleasure."

"I'm one could help admiring that lovely little boy. I wish her solemn looking father, who keeps her like a caged bird, in a cage, would let her come over to the island. It would be no place not for Vivien to have a play-mate."

"She is too far above us for that, wife."

"Perhaps above us, but not above this noble boy. Do you know, I am quite sorry for the great house and family, if it was only known?"

"Perhaps so; certainly he is above the rank we hold, wife, and that in which, as our child, he will be reared up!"

"Oh, I wish we could bring him up like a rich man's son."

"Perhaps he would be happier to be brought up as ours! Riches are not happiness, Mary. Look at Mr. Shoreham! Was there ever a more unhappy man—judging from his looks and the lone way he lives?"

"But people whisper, Ambrose, that—"

"Sit, wife! Never say what people whisper. Whispers are too often the blazes of the serpent, Envy. It may be or not, that he has done great evil in the past, and that what rumor says about his treatment of his dead wife, Isabel's lieutenant mother, Heaven rest her soul! is more or less true. If he has been a bad man, he is perhaps now suffering for it, so far as we can suffer, the sins the grave. It all, however, still shows us that wealth does not bring peace. Let Vivien be as a son would have been to us. I shall teach him my craft, and to be an honest man!"

"And I will teach him to fear God, and read the Bible, and love us as if we were his own parents. But, Ambrose, what do you think of the chain of gold?"

"I have thought a great deal about it. It may lead to the ultimate discovery of his parents."

"It may, as he says that it was given him by his mother, at least by a servant, for lady, knows he thinks was his mother; and that there was a picture of her in it."

"It was broken off and lost, the night he was in the water. If we could have had that, there might be some hopes of knowing who he was! What I wonder at is, that he should have been allowed to retain it; but he says that when they were attempting to deprive him of it, he so shrieked, and cried, and battled for it, that without setting it from his neck, they could not possess themselves of it, and he was suffered to retain it. He says the little locket was on his breast when he sprang overboard, but was gone when he found himself in the cabin of the smack! The chain is peculiar, and would be recognized by any one who had once seen it; besides, on three of the links are engraved three letters of some kind, unknown to me?"

"I was looking at them! They look to me, Ambrose, like the letters in the Greek Bible our minister carried to his pocket."

"Perhaps so?"

At this moment the subject of their conversation

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

came running up to them, as they sat in the door, Ambrose smoking, and Mary knitting, as she talked. His face was unusually animated and glowing, while he eagerly held up in his hand something from which the evening sun was reflected in sparkles.

"What has Vivien found?" cried the wife of Ambrose, laying down her needles, and half-rising to meet Vivien.

"My portrait! Ma belle mere?" he exclaimed. "His mother's picture," said Ambrose quickly. "He has found it?"

"Where?" cried the delighted Mary.

"In the petite chamber—the one where he sat—I observed, holding up to them a miniature set in gold, and about the size of a silver dollar, though of oval shape.

"I found it in a corner of the cuddy, master," said Diggins, coming after him, up from the cabin. "I was looking for an old sinker, feelin' about, under the lockers, when I felt something hard from me as soon as I hold it up, and said it was like my sister's picture. It looks like the angels I've heard on it."

"It is no more, ma belle maman, my good maman?" he cried, with features shining with exquisite joy.

"It is! it is before the eyes of Mary, who gazed on it with murmurs of delight, saying—

"It is like an angel, to be sure!"

"And adieu did you ever see an angel, wife?" asked Ambrose, with a smile, as he laid aside his short pipe, and advanced to look.

"I only guess how they look, and after the sight of this, I shall never doubt of them; but they will look like this face!"

"Indeed they will, for beauty, and discerning such praise as her warm words conveyed. It represented, in the picture, a lady of about twenty or twenty years of age, with a countenance that Eve might have owned without detracting from the exceeding excellence of her own. Sadness was with she came," cried." Eyes of rich saturn, cheeks like the lily, and the most exquisite mouth, golden hair like a tiara of glory, lips that were roses of love, a snow-white neck and bosom, where all the riotous charms swam upon an undulating sea of delight. Her head was superbly poised, and were in a robe of ash-colored satin, trimmed with the purest pride; yet the sweet and noble face was full of goodness and gentleness. The costume was that of court ladies, in the reign of Charles X., and what struck both the eyes of Ambrose and Mary at the same moment, quite as much as her refined beauty, was the similitude of the gold chain and picture upon the swan-like throat, daintily copied by the painter.

"Do you see it, Ambrose?"

"Yes, the very same chain, but not the same picture!"

"Of course not! How could the painter copy this picture which he has himself just painting! but the chain was on her neck. If we make words, she bring this picture to it and put it about his neck!"

"It must have been so."

"My maman! Mary, Ambrose! It is my mama. I am so happy—again it to find!"

"It must have been known, dear wife, I was lifting him into the smack out of the water, and fell into the cuddy," said Ambrose, "where it has been out of sight from then until this time. That accounts for the broken ring on the locket."

Vivien was so overjoyed at recovering the portrait, that he could not contain his delight. He could scarcely let them look at it, he took it away so often to print it to his lips.

"His more! Ma pretite mother?"

"He will now go to her in the moments, with the power of almighty that appertaint to story writers, to the French village, which lays at sea on the East River.

The boat which left her side to rescue the fugitive, after owning about in every direction, for twenty minutes, was recalled on board, by a voice from the deck.

"No signs of him, sir?" answered the officer in command of the cutter, as he came up the ship. "He evidently sunk as soon as he struck the water. Poor child, what could have induced him to spring overboard?"

The captain of the vessel made no reply, but ordering the boat to be hoisted up, walked off. A tall, shorter-faced man drew near to his side, and said in a low voice,—

"You can bear witness, Captain, that he destroyed himself. I had no hand in it."

"Monsieur! What excuse are these! Did you

not half an hour ago say you were instructed to destroy the lad? And now you try to clear yourself, when he has taken his own life into his hands! Is it not enough that he is dead?"

"I have not, sir! But—you perceive, Captain, that I am not sure he is dead! If I had done the deed, I could have reported to my employers that all was right. But I did not see him sink. Did you?"

"Monsieur Le Voisier, I am no executioner! I am disgusted with you and this business. Had I known there were knaveries of this kind in the country by my ship, to destroy him, I would not have had part in it!"

"You could not, you know, have refused. You, and all deep to you, are in the Duke's power; and your refusal would have brought evil on all whom you love—your wife and little one. For debt, Sir Captain, is bondage. The Duke held you in his power!"

The captain groaned. He walked the deck in silence. At length he turned and said abruptly, and almost fiercely,—

"What is the Duke's object in persecuting this poor child, (now safe in God's Heaven,) Monsieur? You are the steward. You are to tell orders."

"But I am not in my lord's confidence, Monsieur Captain! He only told me, and I ask no questions. I did not mean to destroy the child; I left him safe on the shore of the New World. For this purpose I went into the cable, intending to take him to land, but my boat was overturned from him every sign by which he might be recognized, especially that gold chain and picture he wore about his neck. His locket accidentally came with it upon his neck, and is drowned with it. The fiend, my master, knows that I am honest, and that this may lead to trouble for all parties. Those who employed me to destroy the child, are equally fall of an affair in its papers. In this case, I should never have courage to return to France."

"You would cease to be my ally. Come or devil, I care not, you go ashore in the morning!"

"Then you will not leave me in command?"

"Were you not ten now about to leave the noble child, Vivien, there, to perish or be lost among the crowd of paupers? and Heavens has, in its mercy, saved him, and restored him to you. You go on shore, at day-dawn," said the captain, in emphatic tones, in which language they conversed. "If I had known all I know now of the Duke's ill—"

"Silence! You are forgetful that your life is in the home in France is on his domain, and that you owe him more than your gains for seven years can repay; and that I am sent to him with orders, and your wife and little once will be hostages."

not strength to lift her, and he would take her out-by to the shore. She grasped at once at the proposal, and he rowed the boat to the beach as her directed, and safely landed both a hundred yards distant, and safely hauled both a hundred yards more hauled upon the back of the rocky pathway that led to the house.

In the meanwhile Mr. Shenstone had been drawn on board from over the anchor by the arms of the men, who had accidentally run the yacht down, neither seeing the other until too late to escape the accident.

The sloop had no boat, and but for the timely aid of Virden, without question, Isabel, if not her governess, would have perished in sight of Mr. Shenstone, who, unable to swim, could not aid them, and only saved his own life at the moment of collision by clinging to the anchor, which projected low over the bows.

Virden, finding that Isabel was not insensible, and could speak to thank him, said that the lady was able to look after, placed her on shore, and rowed out to bring off Mr. Shenstone, who was waiting with the most intense anguish of soul, to know if his child lived, and to be taken to her.

"Please, sir, get in. I will row you on shore," said Virden, coming along side of the sloop.

"You are a brave little fellow," said the captain of the sloop, a sentiment which his men warmly responded to. He was no sailor-like, and if his poor craft had been lopped, he would have sunk too. But it was a Providence this brave boy was near in a boat, for if one of you had been lost, I should had it weigh on my heart to the day of my death. What is your name, my boy?"

This question was addressed to Virden.

"Virden Forrest and Pearl," said the little girl, and lady ought to go to the house, they are so wet."

Mr. Shenstone descended into the boat; and the captain issued a glittering object into at Virden's feet. "Keep that for your handkerchief, my brave boy."

Mr. Shenstone sat in the stern. The full light showed the fine resolute face of the boy as he rowed him shoreward.

"You are a noble child! a mere child. I owe you my daughter's life. I was wrong to treat you so rudely. It was rudely. I forgot you."

Mr. Shenstone felt grateful. He saw his child standing there and ashamed of his rude act. He felt that he owed her life to the fate-ful. He resolved in some way to reward him. When the boat touched the shore, and he leaped out, he grasped Virden's hand, and said a second time—

"I will not forget you."

How shall we describe the feeling re-union of the father and daughter? He clasped her again and again in his heart, and wept over her many floods of tears. He also was so far subdued from his usual coldness of manner, as to kiss Pearl, who, pale-faced at her escape, the hands of the governess.

"Isabel must not linger here. Her wet clothes are indeed saved, but we cannot expose them longer. He must, my sweet daughter, be taken home with a slight loss of reproof," for yielding to your request to take a moonlight sail. Let us hasten to the house, where you can change your clothes and sleep, refresh yourself after such dreadful dangers."

"Oh, dear, dear papa! I am so glad you are safe. And the——"

She sprang to say the clothes of the boat, whose Virden were quite so much saturated with water as theirs, in drawing her out of the sea; but to her surprise he was not in the boat. He had, in the haste no escort her Mr. Shenstone land, than he hooked the oars with the intention of an expression which shrinks from gratitude, to get away before they could thank him.

The sloop, which had done this mischief, now resumed her course, and Virden was about in return to his place, when the captain of the sloop hailed him. He rowed towards it, and fastening a painter to the bow, leaped laboriously to the deck of the schooner. It was a heavy task and long, but he was not a child to difficulties. After half an hour's exertion he brought it to land, and finally secured it to a bolt in the rock. By this time he was quite exhausted with fatigue, and slowly turned to row homeward. He got about half way across, when overcome with weariness and fatigue, the noble little fellow fell fast asleep while rowing, and was thereof gently laid in the bottom of the boat.

The waves gently rocked the slumberer as he was cast in the bosom of the sea. The deep silence of the night, unbroken by a single sound, favored his profound repose. His little boat, like the Ark of which the infant Moses slept, was the only one on board of Providence. About midnight, Mary having watched and rowed, her prolapse, and finding the boat gone, was filled with a dreadful suspicion. As first she believed him dead; but her voice, as she sprang to the bed as she touched the strand, aroused him.

"Oh, mother, I have saved the life of that little girl!" were his first words.

Here, it seems to be inquiries and reproofs, he informed her of the events of the night. Mary hugged him to her breast and blessed God for her safe return.

"You are too rash—too venturesome altogether, Virden! You did wrong and——"

"But I saved them! If I hadn't done wrong and been there, the good Lord who sang so sweetly, and the pretty Isabel I love so much would have been drowned! Andrew will not think I did wrong, or the poor, unhappy——"

Her only reply was an embrace and words of praise and affection.

The evening of the following day a boat rowed by two men, and containing Mr. Shenstone, landed in the cove of the little island of Rock, at the foot of the log of the fisherman, Andrew. Mary, upon seeing him approach the house, was alarmed, and in full bustle to give the great man a proper reception for "poor folk," as she afterwards said in relating the circumstance to Andrew after his return.

Virden, on his approach, was engaged at the door mending a net, which he had torn in the course of his sail. The cold, dark man bowed slightly as he came in, the condition of Mary's low courtesy.

"That is the wife of Andrew?"

"Yes, if it please your worship!" answered the wife.

"He is away?"

"He will be at home directly."

"Tell him when he does I wish to see him. Ask him not to delay coming over to my house."

"I will tell him, sir."

Here the eye of Mr. Shenstone fell on Virden.

"Come to me, my lad! I wish to thank you for your good services for myself and daughter, last night. I owe half life to your courage."

"I did only what I ought to do, sir," answered the boy with respect, but without stopping his work. "I hope the pretty little girl and sleeping lady are well to-day?"

"Quite so! Here is a gift from each of them as well as one from me."

Here Mr. Shenstone attempted to give him a bracelet of gold, a ring, and a little veil of gold pieces.

"I thank you, Monsieur, but I cannot have nor any presents for saving such a dear little girl's life." And his fine face glowed with pride.

"Then unless you will take them for your son, who requires one by his rebuke!"

"Indeed, sir, not because I do not think the ladies, but I cannot take anything, if you please."

He placed them in Mary's hand, and then said—

"I wish to show my regard for your noble child's deed by obtaining him. Will you allow me this privilege?"

Mary did not, he see, exactly comprehend him, and betrayed this by her looks of doubt.

"I desire to send him to school and college, and to do for him all you would do for him were you able."

"Send him off from us! Oh, never! His to our side."

"But it will be for his good. I see he is by above his station in life, and you would not object to seeing him made a great man."

"He has no need to be that, thank us!"

"Well, send your husband, Andrew, to me. We will talk it over. I have up to my mind to pay the cost of your fine boy's education to manhood; and you will be on a favor to allow me to this request, which I am sure will be for his good."

"Oh, mamma, do let me go! I love books so!" exclaimed Virden with unconcealed joy that there be rich and held you a palace, and make you and Andrew so good and great! I would like that rather than good Degree love, by fishing; but I can be a student, and write books by-and-by and be rich and you and Andrew shall live in a palace!"

"He wishes it, you see," said Mr. Shenstone, who was really prompted by the ardent impulses to be making this offer to educate Virden. "Upon acts of character were, [illegible] the sweet child's affection, even when inscribed on her caged bird; and I assure you of manner that nothing in the world I'll resist to all things that did not concern untimely by his gratitude. Tell me if you give me permission."

"Sir, sir," she answered with filling eyes.

"And by and all your own consent to operate from him, good dame," said Mr. Shenstone, in accosting tones and with a look of kindness. "You need not shut tears! It will be for your child's advantage."

Thus saying the proprietor of "Oak-head," which was the name of his estate, slightly, but coldly bowed, and returning to the house was soon away from the island.

Mary sat as one stupified myself of a daily, as well as compiled with my rescued child's circumstance," he said, [illegible] obtained the [illegible] water; " and if they do not accept my offer I cannot judge myself. But I would rather be would be that the lad [illegible] will think of it, and [illegible] and bracelet, but which when he was called, and the [illegible] already developing of such [illegible] heart), she may deprive me of her whole love. It may be wrong, but human not with [illegible] to [illegible] almost, but I can bear no rival in her regard—none! And were their boy, with his extraordinary courage, and the prestige of having saved her life, to remain so near, she would make him the successor of his master. He has

Andrew entered his own home again. Isabel was seated at breakfast, supported by the side of her father, and Virden, who, pale and yet suffering from the slight effects of the previous day, reclined upon a sofa. Isabel was thanking her father for extending over her with affectionate solicitude; for she had just succeeded in relieving the fears of him and love of her most intelligent pupil.

"Is he not a noble boy, papa? Is he not, Madame-selle Eugenie," said Isabel, gently.

"I feel your kindness, my dear Belle. It was a brave act, indeed, well only for your sake, but that twice suffered to whitening years! When that brave boy shall have reached my side, I will kneel and draw you out of the water in his arms, I thought he was a brave boy. The daring of the act twice has made a strange impression on me! It flows yet through my brain like some hitherto unknown music. I could not sleep for thinking of it, and I was only moonlight, and it was in the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] expression."

"Beautiful, will it be wrong for me to love him?—suddenly and naively asked the lovely child.

The lady smiled, and kissing her on the cheek said playfully—

"No, little! I shall always feel grateful to him. I hope you will."

"Then I may—I must love such-dy-ties in the world but him—not even you, Mamma!"

"He will let you love us at least, dear girl," she answered with a look of gratitude, and with a vague blue and glorious eye of the child.

"He will! He says I must and will love you!"

The lady smiled and drew her to her and embraced her, saying, "We must love one another, Isabel, and I will promise that you shall be as happy as quite as well I am glad he has consented to repay the young deliverer by offering him the education of a gentleman. Perhaps, Isabel, he may grow up to be a young gentleman of talent and be yet worthy of your father's regard and your own friendship."

At the moment Mr. Shenstone entered. He had stood for a moment in the doorway, and had seen in the embrace of the kneeling governess and his brave child.

"Madame," he cried in a stern voice that caused Isabel to spring with fear, and the lady to start, "I employed you not to betray me in my own house, not to teach my child French. You are teaching her to love you and not me. You are false to me, highly displeasing to me. I see that it is too late to remedy the evil, and the only course is for the future is your absence. To-morrow my carriage will await your commands to convey you to the city. Isabel, you will come with me."

Mr. Shenstone took his daughter by the hand, and left the amazed governess scarcely able to comprehend what had passed.

"Is he not a noble boy, my suspicious are confirmed?" she exclaimed after a moment's reflection; "and is he not the child of the mysterious and unscrupulous child's affections? Does he hate all who love her, and such as flee she all love best? It must be so! He is a monster! He is monstrous! And, poor child! she is beginning to fear him! She cannot love him! Her tears, her sighs, and her sinful eyes as he led her out of the room, told me plain as I did, would warn him that he may turn her final love to final dread, and that instead of being reverenced as a father he may be hated as a tyrant. I have suspected him! but it is now a verification. It must be thus, that I go hence child! who will take my place? Some one less darest not love or smile upon her fear of thy father's frown!

The next day the educated, lady-like, Mademoiselle Eugenie, after a three months' residence at Oakhead, took her departure; whilst Isabel, hardly able to yield her up, was borne from her into the house in tears.

The same day Mr. Shenstone had a visit from Andrew. The fisherman was guarded and did not acknowledge that Virden was only an adopted son. He chose to treat the matter in such manner he could not oblige to keep it. He foresaw the benefits that would be realized by Virden; he had already often talked with Mary how he wished that a boy, evidently born to a higher rank, could have the advantages of education. But he, a fisherman, it seemed therefore Providential, as he termed it, when Mr. Shenstone came to the island, to ask an institution of learning at his own cost. He gave God for obtaining him. What was calculate that he might be permitted to see him once a-year.

"Not see, Mr. Andrew. He must not come home," said Mr. Shenstone, hastily and coldly.

"Then we, Mary and I, can go and see him?"

"Yes, without doubt."

Andrew having already gained his wife's reluctant consent, at once concluded the business with Mr. Shenstone. The following Thursday across as the sun rose, Virden took his tearful farewell of his parents, and was soon on board the steamboat which on board the "Sea Bird," which was the name of Mr. Shenstone's yacht. He was provided with money and books necessary for our here in his new situation and all been provided and sent to him by Mr. Shenstone's agent, who had been directed by that Virden was to go to his school in a small town about a quiet spot of land, [illegible] [illegible] than by the mail road.

The "Sea Bird" soon sailed out of the island, over the sorrowful-hearted Mary could not see it half the time for the tears that blinded her; and when it was out of sight, she fell on her knees in prayer of her benefactress. The "Sea Bird" was also out of sight, when Isabel, who had been sitting on the oak grove with Isabel, and seemed to take an interest in her pupil, and was desirous of inducing us as to be within hail; and Virden, in the excess of his joy and high hopes, and gratitude to Mr. Shenstone, sprang to the shrouds. The latter said Farewell, sir! I hope to be so good a scholar you will be proud of master that master."

"Good-bye, Virden! You must not forget us!" cried Isabel.

Mr. Shenstone frowned—but did not speak.

"I will remember you as long as I live," was the quick response, and the ship sailed on with a bearing, wafted swiftly towards the ocean of life, while the boat with the boy and Isabel followed it with her eyes till it melted into the horizon.

CHAPTER V.

We now enter upon a more advanced stage of the life of our hero. We pass over twelve years of his life, during which he was not lost to the land of his, but a young man of two and twenty. Mr. Shenstone had declined, during that time, to see, and with a face rich in manly beauty, and expressive with all the fire and feeling of a generous heart, he [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] buzzed, but black when he was excited, and the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] pleasing. He spoke to men as if he confided in them, and his manner not with [illegible] [illegible] from all noble minds kindred with his own.

During the twelve years of his absence from the humble home of Andrew and Mary, he had been the constant theme of the old couple's fireside. The "Sea Bird" seemed to be as staunch as ever with the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of age, than bending his back a little rounder, and growing a little more bald. He said the "Sea Bird" were still inseparable, and promised to sail many years together.

Mr. Shenstone had shown marked signs of growing age, in the twelve years' interval. His hair was thinner, more nearly all was white, and stooped his shoulders. His brows were gray, and altogether contrasted with his dark glowing eyes. But his eyes, instead of growing more expressive, grew more. Faithful to his pledge to Andrew, he had not seen Virden, but he had heard of the education of Virden, but refrained to speak of him or to see him. Though he was not a child, he was still a rival for his child's affection, was clearly underlying all his generous desire, to repay him for his life-long service to Christian. One of her letters from her sight and thoughts, as to educate him, and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

THE DAGUERREOTYPIST.

BY EDNA ARDEN SPOONER.

Oh, poets of a wondrous art!
Ye have come nobly on this age
To touch on the realm page
That holds the image of the heart.

Ye have not come unto unsure do—
They flash upon us where we stand
And imitate by the poet's hand
With the celerity of the sun-ray!

And though the fraught memories break
Almost their wandering chain, we hold
The darting face, the shadowy gaud,
The blue-veined, the pictured brow.

And though the dreary waters blow
Athwart their silent resting place,
We have the image of the face
That vanishes in the dim below.

Yours is the useful art to win
The fleeting color from the cheek—
To wrest the beauty from the tomb!
Ye catch the image ere evanishes!

We know the ideal, and the grave
May take the rest of a person.
Shine on us sisters the glorious group
Of all that glorified the beauty gone!

And, poet-artist, take my boy,
I give it with a grateful love—
The stamp of God based on your art
Redeems ye from all common sky!

A DAY'S PLEASURING.

A SKETCH OF LONG AGO.

"Mrs. proposes that God dispense."

"Two Islands in the parlor for Miss Kate," said Irish Maggie, thrusting her head into my aunt's room where we were sewing and trying to concoct pleasant summer morning.

"Gracious! Maggie! Who are they? Did they give their names?"

"Faith, and that they didn't, Miss Kate. But they're just some of thim young sparks that do be comin' here so often that they thinks I know thim well by now. That I will say by the name o' Miss Kate?"

"No, Maggie, I am coming to tell them myself," I replied, mounting down my hair before the glass, and pulling my collar straight.

"Never mind, Kate, you'll do very well for the gentlemen. It can't be *somebody*, for he uses here last night, don't think I will see you. I'll go in my stead."

"What a dear, provoking auntie!" I answered, kissing her; and then, concluding that I *did* look well enough for the two gentlemen, I went down stairs.

To tell the truth, I'd a half regret to see anybody that evening, as I had a letter for Aunt Stowe. Venetian blinds were closed to exclude the light, but the room was not so dark that I failed to recognize the two gentlemen who rose as I entered.

"Good morning, good morning, Miss Kate," they chorused, in laughing tones. You deserve credit for not making us wait, as Miss Lane did, whom we called upon just now."

"Do come around and call for a party," said Mr. Roberts. "But Miss Kate knows better. She knows that beauty when unadorned is most adorned."

"Thank you, Mr. Roberts, for giving me so much credit for knowledge; but I can't be so easily entrapped how I have gained it."

"Ah, you know very well what I mean; but I must not say any more, for Mr. Stowe is impatient to do his errand, I see, and there must be time for it."

He smiled, then, gentlemen, and I will listen. Or no wonder a morning everything should be done early and delightful. Then, I can ramble to the beach, and you to spend, I think."

"Certainly I will be very happy to do so, if my friends are going. Have you all the party accepted the invitation?"

"All accepted, if not fully. Some of the ladies we have called upon feared they had engagements for that day, and others wished to consult their mammas. All seemed pleased with the proposition, however, and I think will attend, if possible."

"Consider me engaged for the excursion, then," I said, as the gentlemen rose to go. "I shall be much for affording me so delightful a project to anticipate."

The gentlemen bowed themselves out, and I rose up to inquire if my aunt a knowledge of this delightful invitation. There was one thought connected with it which I did not impart, but sat dreaming over it a half a moment mechanically upon a long seam: *Somebody* belonged to the Bachelor's party, and who, and where could I see him before I ran escort on the 20th; and there were delightful groves in which we might ramble, the long, bright day through, upon All Island.

Well, well, we have all had our dreams, I suppose! Dreams as if the glow and beauty of our youth has not long since faded out of them!

The next night I slept into the clear sky on the long expected morning of the 20th. At ten o'clock somebody called and you may be sure he was not kept waiting very long. We walked along the pleasant streets, usually so quiet, but now gay with the sound of well-dressed ladies and their bright faces, as they wended their way, each with one of the "Bachelor's" by her side, toward the pier where the Paul Pry was moored. The little boat, with the inquisitive, saucy air, seemed to revel in the same buoyant spirit as we in its best iron find day. The decks scoured to the last degree of whiteness, flags and streamers waving from its mast-head, and fastened about the walls of the tiny cabin, and a general holiday appearance of appearance, as if it was about setting out upon some pleasure jaunt.

Presently everybody was on board, and all was ready. The ourage-pipe ceased sending forth its thunder, the mate moved the helm round, and, with the band upon the deck playing a lively air, the Paul Pry bounded smile-wise out on the water, turned in a broad, circling track when she reached the open bay, and then sped upon her course; while land over the waters, from the receding shore, came the loud harmonies of the crowd of idlers and those who had gathered to see us off.

Oh, how beautiful were the blue waters of that lovely bay that summer morning—every tiny ripplet sending back specks of light as the sun-rays played upon it; while the green shores dotted with white hamlets and scattered farm-houses, with here and there a church-spire pointing upward into the infinite blue, where the fleecy clouds sailed on, like the wings of angels hovering over the beautiful earth, seemed smiling in vernal beauty, and rejoicing in the merriest harmonies of nature, never felt more deeply than in that peaceful and lovely spot. Youth, and joy, and beauty seemed sung to me your divinest song that summer morning of long ago! Discords and grief notes have mingled with the strain as the years rolled on, but its pristine melody has never melted from my ear!

I were slight mourning for a dear friend but recently gone to the spirit-land, and did not delight in the dance which merry youths and maidens kept up on the white deck, with undiminished spirit, all the morning, and the sweet polonaise and long dance, given as "morelds rising up out of the blue water, passed, the Paul Pry came out upon the open lake, where there were waves rolling high enough to make their tossing a little exciting. The dancing and flirting, much sensible talk and also much chattering, filled up the time until the Paul Pry rounded up and towards the island, and soon after to a little bay, between two jutting points, and the party were quietly disembarked.

Very joyously and happily passed that long summer afternoon. The gayer ones of the party danced merrily upon the velvety green-sward, to smooth and level as mat, and all declared it more have been the fairies' residence. The sunniest sal once strolled in groups, or pairs, among the trees, or followed the course of the little brook that emptied its bright waters into the bay where the Paul Pry was moored. Others entered, with their fishing tackle, upon a tiny basket which, without visible outlet or inlet, was in connection with the Lake, was embedded in the green, setting off the ancient trees that rose above the highest point of the island. Meanwhile the elder vants were laying a long table beneath the trees, and filling it with the fruits and delicacies of the excellent dinner which the host of the "Excelsior" had sent on board the Paul Pry just before we started.

Stephen Stowe, one of the famous committee whom visit was mentioned at the close of the last sketch, had long been attached to sweet Annie Burton's train, and was her accepted lover. For a few months before long his sign upon the front of a rank office in Mulberry-st. and he had commenced a flourishing professional business, it was confidently supposed the marriage would not be much longer delayed.

Annie Burton was an orphan girl who found a home with Squire Burton, and was his favorite niece; where she was as a daughter to the old couple who almost worshipped her in return for the love she bestowed upon them. They had made but one objection to their niece's choice in her marriage—that was, that she should still continue to reside with them. When Stephen Stowe would have declined this condition, as definitely proposed by the old gentleman and his partner while in dashing to provide a home, all was well. For his part, Squire Burton had silenced his scruples by saying:—

"Stephen, you and all I have will be Annie's when I am gone. My life cannot be prolonged many years; and, surely, you will not deprive its declining days of the society of your wife's friend."

"And wife" and I would walk to darken the remainder of our lives if Annie were not by."

Weston yielded, as who would not to such an appeal; and it was settled that on adopted son would soon be added to the Burton household. Today the pair walked apart, and talked in low tones of their happiness and prospects, and looked for the new life which was about to commence. To them everything seemed gay and bright as the hours went through the medium of their deep happiness.

Strolling along the woodland paths with sweet Lady beside her, Mary Weston and others looked upon the many roots of a huge beech, and would have turned away unheeded, but Annie stopped in surprise, which I saw was engraving. But Annie caught sight of me, and gayly called to me to see what Weston gave me his place, and the two gentlemen, themselves as fast friends as Annie and myself, stood leaning against the tree and looked at me, upon us while we clustered the planes of the spreading roots. Annie had the lead, as the first discovery in the Burton household which were to be devoted to her married life. I was the next, as my friendship and Annie had promised to be bridegroom's son "just to learn how to conduct himself when he turn came."

We sat there, deeply interested in our talk, until the summons to dinner was heard; and the two separate parties of strollers and anglers were soon making their way towards the pavilion and tables. The fairies' tall-room was deserted, and nymphs and Naiad tripped upon the green-sward, almost as lightly as Titania's midgets, when engaged in the noble ordering into a consumption of the excellent dinner and supper that showed a generous and human beings, after all.

Mirth and laughter, jest and song, passed round the "festive board," until full justice had been done to the feast things gathered from the land and the party dispersed again—some hieing to the ballroom, so they termed it, with renewed gaiety, and others starting off through the wood for the shell set in the hopes of catching a few more fish—at any rate of being upon the boat of Charon, and over the surface of its mysterious waters.

The four who had been under the beech-tree were of this party. When we reached the shore we found the boat so old and crazy that Annie and I both shrank from entering it. I was about to call and timid should going upon the water in small boats, and could not be induced to trust myself in it; but Annie, more courageous, or more trustful in Weston's protection, was not to be moved, and after her, than I in those whispered in my ear, finally consented. Weston sided her into the boat. As he was about to follow, he suddenly turned back, and said to me:

"Miss Kate," said he, "I can't tell why it should be so, but every time our excursion, or my afternoon, these words have been singing in my ear: 'Mary Weston, you will be married!' I begin to be that anything will come in to mar our plans, and to ruin our happiness?"

His looked at me so appealingly, that, though his words struck a chill to my heart, I could not refrain from answering with a light laugh.

"Nonsense! Don't be sentimental, Mr. Stowe. A way with superstitious fancies on a lovely day, you know, and now Annie is waiting for you, and wandering at this mysterious sorcerer."

I could see that my light words jarred unpleasantly upon some chord of feeling, and I half repented having uttered them; but there was not time to say more, he turned away and leaped into the boat.

I stood upon the bank watching them as they rowed out into the centre of the lakelet and there cast their lines. There were several fish caught, and we could hear the merry voices and the little screams of the girls at some sudden motion of the boat, or as the little creatures they lifted out of their elements, were thrown into their midst. In a few minutes the signal was given to return to the shore, and the steam was heard escaping from the Paul Pry's pipe. The gentlemen lifted their oars, and turned the boat toward the little landing where we stood.

I never knew how it happened, or whether any one deserved blame, but suddenly the crazy boat careened and filled; and, in a moment the whole party were precipitated into the water.

Run for assistance," shouted to the crew, as they struck the shallow of the landing. I turned just as my friend plunged into the water to swim to the rescue. Fruitlessly I sped along the rough path, unheeding the briers that tore my dress and wounded my feet, and the branches which I snatched from my cries brought assistance, and by the time I reached, all the party were out, and been drawn on shore. Annie Burton was not there. Mary Weston Stowe was madly hastening on plunging into the water and diving for the body. He soon relapsed into insensibility, for he had gone down several times in search of her, before he could allow himself to be drawn upon the shore, and was forcibly compelled to relinquish it. He, with the rest, were conveyed on board the steam-boat, while the little lake was dragged with boat-hooks as thoroughly as possible, in hope of finding the body of Annie Burton.

At last, but not till the twilight had fallen solemnly upon the dark woods and bay lake, the body emerged to her white dress she was unclasped to the surface. I saw her as they laid her upon the beach, so cold and white. There was a dark wound upon her temple, which had probably caused insensibility, if not almost instant death. Upon the lake shore all hope was given up.

In what a sad procession we bore the dead girl back to her home, which she had left that morning with a heart leading beneath its burden of happiness! How solemnly we sailed out upon the bay lake, bearing the dead to the living! How the moonlight of her radiant face should no more illumine the island. Memorials of the excursion which had swelled with joy at morning, now sadly mingled with the sighs of mourning, and the paper cone of confectionery, the excellent dinner which the host of the "Excelsior" had sent on board the Paul Pry just before we started.

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UNDER THE SUNRISE.

It is a blessed and holy privilege, last mournful, very, the contemplation and the memory of the early lost. By contemplation, I mean the spiritual glance of the beautiful and good vouchsafed unto our inner life—an abstract life somtree and purer than that that goes out and mixes with the world and age of time and commerce.

I never think of my dear and lost once as they look down there, under the thick cloak of the water, with a strong dear close looking out my kisses, and the violets and grasses glowing through my tears instead of smiles, and the long locks of the beloved drapery. But I keep forever sun glistens in the ancient galleries of my dauntless love. Clear-drawn as starlight on a waveless sea—beautiful as the darling once, as they would have been—as they might have been, rather. All is mournful angel is that "might have been."Keeping, like the restless phantom of a hope forever lost, in the shadow-haunted chambers of fiction and widowed hearts.

I love my dead more, sitting here in the sun summer of this mid-winter morning, than I ever loved them in the tonal glory of the summer time of their lives, more June days. Then I once could rouse in my look of filial.

I love them in this ghastly sunrise as I never raised them among all the sweet company of flowers in the fair summer halls of beauty. I feel a deeper love here, in my home, a closer union with the river of death, and sorrowful and bleak, than I ever mentioned dwelling in the days of echoes. I take them, of the blessed feet that quiet among the silent waters, as they go full softly in the shining fields of a new immortal life.

Ah! how softly they pacing blest worthy p dirts of the Eternal Love! how they look back upon into the joy beaten of the walking watery wonderland, with a full gold of my memory, and love and sweet away—into the chill bosom and shadow of the river, and I rather into the perfect summer and cloudless splendor of the smile of God!

How very simple a thing can make the heart ache exceedingly! Just now a little bird, innocent and plainer than my hair and face, crossed the sunlight of my window sunbeam, and went gayly down, down the gray meadows trilling melodiously and exultingly over new arts-loves and flowers. And, oh! what a psalm of summer, what a breath of the ere of roses and ripe, that they wandered into the still the sentence should overlap beneath the seraph-guided bank of earth's Divinest colors, to the land of Canaan, lighting the hills of Cashmere, odor-fanned, ever burned and flashed like you ethereal blossoming of the majesty of God!

We are prone to people—giving to them the human attributes—the gorgeous sire of the mid-day realm with rare and glorious beings who once had their home in our midst. Have you seen the bright herpings of the angel-hosts in Heaven! *May* dear not visit us—standing off the earth's dimmest sphere, to smell the white rose of the Eternal beauties!

The floating isle of bloom hath its visionary lilies bowed beneath the white feet of the heart's dear one! Why not the sun-flower, darker than England's Hexagal of the morning dance to the mutual reach of purple glory in a-shine with the glitter of the sun? Why not the hyacinth, the violet, and leaning from golden latticee, and glancing from the many-colored gleam in our darkened inner eyes, the flower we have lost. Forever at sea with the ever-moving and ever-changing waves!

But, alas! the mortal dreaming under the consummate splendors of a wintry sunrise! Soon as I write the word, "Heaven," I feel that the sweetest my name can hope to go. The lilies fade in the visionary isle. The faces vanish out of those regal palaces, and temples of the soul-worship. The sun-bird, and half hour-glass, and the lands of cold gray storm. And even as perish all that is earth, dim and unreal, leaving an aching memory of the lost, which is shadow on the heart of the watcher left, so can one shine away. In Heaven we shall see as we are seen, and be known as we are known of God!

EDNA ALDEN SPOONER.

THE WAR OF THE SEXES.

A PARLEY.

The two sexes contending for superiority were once at war with each other, which was chiefly carried on by their auxiliaries. The males were drawn up on the one side of a very spacious plain, the females on the other; between them was left a very wide space, which was filled with the spectators. At each extremity of this middle space lay several covered bodies of neutral forces, who waited for the event of the battle, in order to declare themselves, that they might then act as victors.

The main body of the male auxiliaries was composed of the strength of the kingdom, and the plumed upon him as many smiles and glances, as he quite swallowed and thinned himself.

In short, he was ready to call for quarter, but was ashamed to do it; the women, on the contrary, were not quite so much afraid of the commander of the male right wing, and would have turned the fate of the day, had not he been timely opposed by Cowardice, who commanded the left wing of the female auxiliaries. Cunning was the chief engineer of the fair army; but upon this occasion was posted, as we have been told, to receive the attacks of Valour. He was very exhortative, and saw the workings of their inner consciences; the conduct of the one, and the strategems of the other. Error was drawn up in a more gaudy manner than behold it, gave the victory sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other, though most frequently the advantage was on the side of the female commander.

In the meantime the conflict was very great to the left wing of the army, where the battle began to turn in the male side. This wing was commanded by an old experienced officer called Patience, and on the female side by a general known by the name of Scorn. The latter, that fought after the manner of the Parthians, had the better of it all

the beginning of the day; but being quite tired out with the long pursuits, and repeated attacks of the enemy, who had been repulsed above a hundred times, and rallied as often, began to think of securing himself on a sudden a body of neutral forces began to move. The leader was of an ugly look, and gigantic stature. He acted like a Draw-cansir, sparing neither friend nor foe. His name was Lust. On the female side he was opposed by one Ugly-face, a monster of horror, commanded by a young officer that had the face of a chevalier, and the heart of Hobbes. This terrible young hero was supported by one of a more masculine, and yet fiercer behavior, called by men, Honour, and by the women, Impudence. They both of them endured labour, and drove back the enemy more than once, but at length resigned all directions.

The dreadful monster, after having overturned whole squadrons in the female army, fell in among the males, where he made a more terrible havoc than on the other side. He was here opposed by Wisdom, who drove up all his forces against him, and held the fight in suspense for some time, but at length quitted the field.

After a great ravage on both sides, the two armies were pretty equally diminished on the. And in order to it, drew out a small chosen band, whom they placed by consent under the conduct of Virtue, who in a little time after left the field, and only came out of the field.

This was followed by a second neutral leader, whose name was Love, marched in between the two armies. His leader up of the thousand valiant boys, that threw their darts and arrows promiscuously among both armies. The wounds they gave were only skin deep, but extremely sore. They were pleasing to those that felt them; and but in a little time after, that they wrought a kind of mutual friendship, reconciliation, and good will in both armies. The combatants instead of killing one another, embraced, and stretched out their arms with tears of joy, so longing to forget old animosities, and renew their friendship.

The last ground of neutrals that appeared in the field was Love, who marched between the two armies, and made a kind of truce between them. Love generally accompanied him, and recommended the same, pair by pair, to his good offices.

But as it is usual among the generals of armies to drone themselves in the habit of a great leader, Stupidity and Avarice had taken on the garb and habit of Love, by which means they often betrayed their friends into the hands of the enemy. All couples whom he would never have joined together, had it not been brought about by the dalliance of these two impostors.

THE ABSURDITY OF PRIDE.

If there be anything which makes human nature ridiculous to beings of superior faculties, it is pride. How contemptible must so weak a thing as those imaginary perfections that swell the heart of a man, and of those that surround him appear to angels, whether in blurb, fortune, or title, which one man enjoys above another, that it must certainly very much mortify those in whom they are not to discover, when they see a mortal puffed up, and valuing himself above his neighbors on any of these accounts, at the same time that he is obnoxious to all the natural imperfections of his species.

To act this thought in its true light, we will fancy, if you please, that yonder mole-hill is inhabited by creatures endowed with reason, and that a grasshopp and way of life only excepted) is endowed with the same faculties. How should we smile to hear one give as an account of the pedigree, distinction, and noble alliances of his family. Or observe how the whole swarm divide and make way for the ant that passes through them? You must fancy to yourself that the whole mole-hill is in a better blood in its veins than any insect in the neighborhood. Or, to make the scene still more ridiculous, how should we see a grasshopper, who is but of it, how slow he marches forward, how the whole rabble of ants keep their ranks on either side of him, observe one placed upon a little eminence, and looking down as a long row of laborers. He is the insect that has the honor to be born with a tail of half a yard in length, and a quarter of an inch broader than the rest of his body. Upon the approach, and has at least fifteen berry-coarse in his grasp. Is it now about the dignity of human nature to stand safe from him, and who, for all that we can discover, is as good an animal as himself.

But to come nearer to ourselves: Do not you take notice of a little white straw that is carried in his mouth? That straw, you must understand, he would not part with for the longest tract of corn in the field. Do you not see how he has undergone to purchase it? See how the ants of all qualities and conditions swarm about him! How solicitous they are to serve him! How would we all his numerous circle of attendants follow the straw! Where it is up, and how does the insect bend, or can over his back to come at his successor.

Of now you laugh at the vanity and frailties of the mole-hill, observe first the ant that listens to the counsel on her left hand, at the same time that she seems to be wholly attentive to the orders of her superior. Or, to tell this poor insect that she is a goddess, that her eyes are like pearls, and her skin as soft and clear as her disposed. She believes him, and grows proud: a thousand times more proud of the vanity of the insect on your left hand. She assumes crawl with age; but you must know she has been a grasshopper, and has all the while, unperceived, grown out of those crests which her reach. Or, to put her in mind of her humble original, tell her that she has a pair of wings, and that she is a grasshopper. She will not believe you.

AN HOUR.—It is no uncommon error among the ambitious to desire to marry above their rank; but those who succeed in their desire will find that they have purchased it at a dear rate. Those who fancy themselves beneath their merit, will be apt to think themselves unfit for the sphere in which they previously moved. Those who qualified them, and where they will eventually be expected to neglect and mortification, will be a constant thorn in the side of the proud, for which no animal rank is poor compensation.

THOUGHTLESS.—A learned doctor, referring to light lacing, avers that it is a public benefit, inasmuch as it kills all the foolish girls, and leaves the wise ones to grow up to be women.

THE MAD LOVER.

BY ALICE CARY.

When Summer rolled her broad and lazy back
In the green grass, and tossed of laughing boats
Followed a sun on her shining track,
To join the hills and river banks with flowers,

Also the locks would shake their tresses free
In the tender morn—for even the morning grieve
Has its whispers, hearing him repeat
The serious commands of his father.

Then he had mortal cares—indirectly care,
And pain, and passions huge enough for two,
Till they, with the needs of despair,
Pulled out the eyes of love, and saved him so.

And then he passed to those fantastic lands
Where reason no longer governs absolutely,
But wanders hand in hand with fancy
Well aided the beauty of his lady's eyes.

Ah, when are the delights of sensible beauty?
O poets, what is his your dreams of bliss,
When out of the eyes of love the soul looks out,
And gives him her red finger-tips to kiss?

FOREST SKETCHES—NO. 20.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY COL. WALTER P. DUNLAP.

HUNTING A NEW GANG.

Uncle Abner's house had two wooden remaining wholly around it—one near the ground, and one at the second story. One bright, beautiful morning, after an extended rainfall, we sat upon the upper veranda smoking and chatting. We all had negroes save old Gael. He made his pipe. It was an old companion, and he liked its flavor. While we thus sat, Gael called our attention to two men who were passing through a hollow, some thirty rods distant. They were stout, well clad men, and armed in a hurry.

"Them don't look like human beast," said Gael, still gazing upon them.

"Don't they?" said Abner.

"Not a bit of it. D'y'e mind how they turn an' look back every once in a while? I tell ye, they're villains—now ye may depend on't.

Just as Gael spoke, the strangers disappeared behind a clump of mulberry trees; and shortly afterwards we saw them again in a path that led towards the swamp. A few observations were passed, among which was one from Uncle Abner, to the effect that he honest man could have any particular business in his swamp,—and then the subject was dropped, and we resumed the train of conversation which had been thus interrupted.

The same up very soon, and we remained in the house most of the forenoon. It was very near noon, and we had given our negroes the shady side of the veranda, when we saw a horseman approaching at a brisk trot.

"Why, Gabriel Walker," said our host. "He's our sheriff. What can he want here?"

"He'll want one of them two strangers hain't got somethin' to do with tho', suggested Gael.

And Gael was right. We mounted and met Walkerton at the door. He was just the man for the office he held. He was not a burly man; nor yet was he powerful in build. But he was possessed of one of those peculiar faces which at once mark the cold, calculating, fearless man—full of nerve and muscle, and quick in both thought and action. In frame he was small and symmetrical; his dress consisted of a dark gray shirt, of stout linen, secured at the waist by a belt, within which were stuck a brace of heavy pistols; a cap of yellow skin; and a pair of leggings of the same material. As a sheriff, one would read him implicitly; as a villain, he would have been feared in the same ratio.

As soon as we had all been introduced to him he turned to our host and said—

"I am sorry you've come. Have you seen any one pass here to-day?"

"Yes," returned Abner; "we saw two men pass this morning, and we thought, too, that they had a villainous look."

"Were they stout men?"

"Yes."

"Dressed in gray clothes?"

"Yes—and pretty neat, too."

"Did they have any arms?"

"Not in sight."

"Which way did they go?"

"We saw them first, passing through the hollow over beyond the corner of the cotton-field; and after that, they went towards the swamp, and I'm sure they entered it."

"Those are the chaps," cried the sheriff. "They are Watty Manton and Hanover Hare—two of the worst men in the State. They murdered an old man, and a young girl, only night before last, and robbed the house of two thousand dollars in gold and bank-notes. I tracked them to Sherwport, and there I got a partial clue that led me this way."

We had heard of Hare while in New Orleans; and while on that boat, we had heard considerable said about both of them. They were not only notorious villains, but for several years had succeeded in avoiding trial. They had been arrested twice, but had made their escape. They had committed several daring highway robberies, and for the past month; and how many murders they might have done, no one knew.

"Look ye," said Walkerton; "I have not enough at Sherwport, but I dared not bring them on. I heard that you had a couple of stout negroes, and I hoped I might find help among you. I am very sure that they are somewhere about the swamp at Sherwport; and had I been seen coming out with a posse they might have got wind of it, and escaped villains at my heels. These fellows-did their work carefully, and keep a hidden hand while they can. Will you go with me?"

There were six gun's spoken so near together that they sounded almost like one. Then there was much pleased.

"That don't get far away in that swamp, can they?" he asked.

"No," answered he host. "They can pick around in the bottom below there, but they can't get without coming back this way."

"That's it," returned Walker. "They mean to hide through the day, and make their escape to-night. For, if they can get away with only the great highway under cover of night, they'll have a fortnight long before pursuing. But I think we'll give 'em some trouble before we start 'em."

"We must have dinner first," said Abner. "You shall have a bite with us and then we'll set out."

The kind old plan, as he knew the villains would make no effort to escape from the swamp before dark.

It was not a great while to our dinner hour, and when the meal was finished we prepared to set out.

"Now look," said Walkerton, "we may have several hot work. Any two of us may fall upon the villains alone. The safest way will be for each man to prepare himself upon the supposition that he is to meet the rascals single-handed."

This was good advice, and we acted upon it. We each took a brace of pistols, hunting-knife and rifle. We were warned by the sheriff to be careful, for he assured us that the two murderers were not only desperate characters, but in the present case "would be hit and double with them. If they could kill us—very can, and then be apprehended, their fate could be no more than it would be if they were captured without striking a blow.

There were seven of us, including the sheriff. Flanders being off among his negroes; and though we generated somewhat of a formidable array, yet we knew we had a dangerous work before us.

We started, however, taking the direct route to the nearest point of the swamp, which was not more than a mile distant. Among the various topics of conversation on the way, the movements of the villains came up, and it was not improbable that they had passed the swamp with a design of making a circuit to the house of our host on their left. Had they done so, they might have made quite a lift, as no one would have been likely to be on the watch, unless some of the negroes should have happened to be awake.

There were two points where the swamp could be entered with safety, and one of them was the point we first reached. Here we brought the skill of old Gael into use. He examined the path, and very soon announced that no one had passed in or out during the day. Uncle Abner next led us to the second opening, which was nearly half a mile distant, and here the inspector made another examination.

"They got by here," said he, almost as soon as he cast his eyes on the ground.

He showed us the "signs," and though we should not have discovered them, yet we could see that now they were pointed out.

"Now look here," said our host, as soon as we became satisfied that the villains were in the swamp, "they can't get out at any point on the bottom. The great bayou runs almost around it, and the rest of the way is all soft mud. If they have been in there, they must be somewhere within the range of half a mile."

"Perhaps we'd better cut trace them further," suggested Walkerton.

"We'll see how far their trail is signed," returned Gael: "Come on."

He walked on, quite rapidly for some distance, following the trails over a sort of rough ground, which, from its shaking beneath our feet, seemed to have a subterranean depth. The ground was large and plenty, but there was little or no underbrush. Trees were numerous, but the bottom had been formed by a deposit of mud, and the stiff, stout-rooted grass had grown so thickly as to form a kind of crust, or network, sufficiently strong to bear our weight.

At length we came to a point where the tangled network began to give way, and here we found that here Gael lost the trail. He searched a long while, but without effect.

"What is there beyond here?" he asked of Uncle Abner.

"The shore of the bayou isn't far off," returned the old man.

"And how it is here to the left?"

"Well, I couldn't say exactly. The bayou takes a sweep around, but it's a big one, and I'm sure it's seven here and the path we first came to."

"Then that may be good footin' in here?"

"Oh yes—I can see there for quite a piece; the undergrowth is so thick that we can't navigate it."

Gael stood for a few minutes in deep thought, and, pointing to the left, which was to the direction of the bayou, said, "I'm sartin they've been in here; but I need a trail just back a bit. Come on."

We followed him back a few rods, and there we found a place where the grass was not quite so thick as before. Here and the path we first came to."

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We followed him back a few rods, and there we found a place where the grass was not quite so thick as before. Here and there the path was not so much as to render it necessary for us to step aside. Gael knelt down and examined the ground with the greatest care, and I'm sure they entered it."

"There's the shape," cried the sheriff. "They are Watty Manton and Hanover Hare—two of the worst men in the State. They murdered an old man, and a young girl, only night before last, and robbed the house of two thousand dollars in gold and bank-notes. I tracked them to Sherwport, and there I got a partial clue that led me this way."

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